

Factual Report – Attachment 10

Interview transcripts for a US Coast Guard Lieutenant and a sea trial captain from Bollinger Shipyard who were onboard the *Glenn Harris*.

METEOROLOGY

DCA21MM024

*Submitted by: Mike Richards
NTSB, AS-30*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CAPSIZING OF THE LIFTBOAT *SEACOR* *

POWER SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON, *

LOUISIANA, ON APRIL 13, 2021 *

*

* * * * *

Accident No.: DCA21MM024

Interview of: [REDACTED]

Via Microsoft Teams

Wednesday,
April 21, 2021

APPEARANCES:

ANDREW EHLERS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

MICHAEL RICHARDS, Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board
(Via Microsoft Teams)

CAPT TRACY PHILLIPS, Chair
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

LT [REDACTED], Recorder
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

[REDACTED], Member
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

LTJG [REDACTED], Search and Rescue Controller
U.S. Coast Guard

[REDACTED], Member
U.S. Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

JOHN PRESTON, Chief Surveyor Offshore
American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)

MICHAEL CENAC, QHSE Manager, Designated Person Ashore,
Chief Security Officer
Seacor Marine

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I N T E R V I E W

(14:46 p.m.)

MR. MUISE: This is Marcel Muise. It's 14:46 on the East Coast with the NTSB. We're online today investigating or interviewing Lieutenant [REDACTED] from Coast Guard Cutter Glenn Harris, who was one of the first responders for the capsizing of the Seacor Power on April 13th. Lieutenant [REDACTED], can you spell your name for us and give us your title?

MR. [REDACTED] Yes, sir. [REDACTED] is the first name, [REDACTED]

MR. MUISE: And you can consent for me to record this interview?

MR. [REDACTED] Yes.

MR. MUISE: Okay. Also online with us from NTSB, Drew?

MR. EHLERS: Hey. Good afternoon, Lieutenant [REDACTED] My name is Drew Ehlers; I'm the investigator in charge of this accident investigation for the NTSB. My name -- last name is spelled E-H-L-E-R-S.

MR. MUISE: Anybody else from NTSB? Mike Richards?

MR. RICHARDS: Mike Richards. That's R-I-C-H-A-R-D. I am the NTSB weather Group Chairman.

MR. MUISE: And Captain Kucharski?

MR. KUCHARSKI: Good afternoon, Lieutenant [REDACTED] Mike Kucharski, National Transportation Safety Board, and I am the Group Chairman of operations. Spelling my name is K-U-C-H-A-R-S-

1 K-I. Thank you for being here.

2 MR. MUISE: And from the Coast Guard, please?

3 MR. ALMA: Hey. Good afternoon, Lieutenant. This is
4 Lieutenant Junior Grade [REDACTED] with the U.S. Coast Guard.

5 MS. PHILLIPS: Good afternoon. This is Captain Tracy
6 Phillips, last name P-H-I-L-L-I-P-S. I'm the chair of the Marine
7 Board of Investigation.

8 MR. [REDACTED] Lieutenant [REDACTED] Coast Guard
9 Marine investigation.

10 MR. [REDACTED] This is [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard, [REDACTED]
11 [REDACTED].

12 MR. [REDACTED]: [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard, [REDACTED]
13 [REDACTED].

14 MR. MUISE: And from ABS. Mr. Preston, are you there?

15 MR. PRESTON: Yes, sir. This is John Preston from ABS, J-O-
16 H-N, P-R-E-S-T-O-N. American Bureau of Shipping.

17 MR. MUISE: And from Seacor?

18 MR. CLERC: Good afternoon. This is Tim Clerc, vice
19 president of engineering for the Seacor Marine based in Houston.
20 Selling of my last name C-L-E-R-C.

21 MR. MUISE: And --

22 MR. CENAC: Michael Cenac with Seacor Marine, C-E-N-A-C.

23 MR. MUISE: And there's somebody online from [REDACTED]?

24 MR. [REDACTED]: Yes, sir. Good afternoon. This is Lieutenant
25 Commander [REDACTED] with Coast Guard District 8

1 (indiscernible).

2 MR. MUISE: And somebody else online from [REDACTED]

3 MR. [REDACTED]: Hello, sir. Yes. This is Lieutenant, junior
4 grade, [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.

5 MR. MUISE: Okay. Thank you. So Mr. Ehlers, I forgot tell
6 you Commander [REDACTED] is from District 8 legal, he's on the line
7 with us. If you need to take a break and talk to him at any time,
8 we'll do that, and you guys can go offline and chat if you want.

9 MR. EHLERS: Thank you, sir.

10 MR. MUISE: Okay.

11 MR. EHLERS: And I think, Marcel --

12 MR. MUISE: Yes, sir.

13 MR. EHLERS: This is Drew here. We asked for -- and I'm
14 sorry, one member from each party only in the investigation -- or
15 in the interviews with the exception being the Coast Guard. And I
16 see both Tim Clerk and Michael Cenac online.

17 Michael and Tim, do you want to take a second and just decide
18 which one of you wants to participate here? I'm not trying to
19 leave anyone out, but if we have too many folks on the line it
20 just becomes cumbersome. So if you want to take a minute to do
21 that, we'll step over or we'll halt for a second.

22 MR. CENAC: Thank you, Drew. And I'll remain online and Tim,
23 thank you for your attendance.

24 MR. CLERC: Okay. Yes. Just update me later, Mike. I'll
25 leave it with you guys.

1 MR. MUISE: Okay. Thanks again, Captain.

2 INTERVIEW OF [REDACTED]

3 BY MR. MUISE:

4 Q. So just to get started I'd like to get some background
5 information. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and how
6 you got to be Captain of a brand new FRC?

7 A. Yeah. Thank you there, sir. Lieutenant [REDACTED]
8 here. I graduated from the Coast Guard Academy here back in 2012.
9 Following my graduation I went onto my first tour in Kodiak,
10 Alaska on board the national security-- or excuse me, high
11 endurance cutter, Douglas Munro.

12 Following that, I moved down to San Diego in support of one
13 of our deployable special forces unit in San Diego (indiscernible)
14 specific tactical law enforcement as an officer in charge and
15 deployable team leader on the enforcement units on allied
16 deployment, allied naval vessels for counter-drug deployments.

17 Following that tour, I was there for three years. I was a
18 staff officer at Pacific area. Following that I was the combat
19 systems officer on the Coast Guard Cutter Stratton, the National
20 Security Cutter in Alameda, California. I was there for two years
21 and I just departed that unit (indiscernible) reported end of
22 February to Bollinger pro command there at Bollinger Shipyards to
23 start the pre commissioning process for the Coast Guard Cutter,
24 Glenn Harris.

25 Q. Okay. Thanks. Can you tell us a little bit about the Glenn

1 Harris? And actually the 154 in general.

2 A. Yeah. So Glenn Harris is the hull number 1144, it's the 44th
3 hull out of the shipyard Bollinger, it's 154-foot fast response,
4 it's about three quarters of the way through the procurement of
5 those FRCs. Glenn Harris and hull 44 are being assigned to our
6 Far East unit, that's in Bahrain. It will be used out there to
7 support the Sixth Fleet commander as well as mission sets that are
8 out there in the Persian Gulf.

9 Q. Okay. The 154 in general, can you tell us a little bit about
10 the capabilities and seakeeping characteristics of it?

11 A. Yeah. So still a little new with getting familiar with the
12 particular specs, but 154 has two MTU diesel engines, two
13 generators, capabilities can come up to, you know, roughly 29
14 knots, the fixed propellers. And seakeeping was -- the only thing
15 that I can really remember is a beam to knot wind with a constant
16 -- I actually don't have that number correct, I'd have to pull
17 some of the ship data to answer that, those numbers more
18 accurately.

19 Q. Okay. And I understand you have a small boat as well?

20 A. We do have a small boat. It's one of our -- it's our, what
21 we call the Mark IV, it's the fourth iteration of our over the
22 horizon small boat (indiscernible).

23 Q. So on the day of this accident, you guys left Bollinger and
24 were underway doing sea trials? Is that accurate to say sea
25 trials?

1 A. No, sir. So this day underway was a training day for the
2 crew. So Bollinger assigned certain days where (indiscernible).
3 This was the second of two days where Bollinger sea trial crew
4 gets us underway and teaches us a little bit about the
5 capabilities of the cutter.

6 This day in particular we were prescribed to see the
7 limitations and capabilities of the ship, and to also do a little
8 bit of maneuverability for the crew while in open ocean. We We,
9 due weather and in this event, we weren't able to do that training
10 for the day.

11 Q. Okay. I understand. So speaking of the weather, and again
12 this is before the accident, do you remember what the forecast
13 might have been before you got underway?

14 A. Yeah. So the forecast for the day was definitely in the
15 marginal category, roughly in the 30 to 40 knot wind and upwards
16 into the possibility of some heavy seas. I don't -- I can't
17 recall the exact number, but the offshore wind and (indiscernible)
18 the predicted wind was definitely in the marginal. We were -- we
19 definitely had cause for concern that was within our risk
20 mitigation and we talked about it. Yeah.

21 Q. So do you have a favorite source for getting weather
22 information?

23 A. Yeah. So for us because we were, technically, in the student
24 mentality, I wasn't in -- other than just to be informed about the
25 sea state, I wasn't using what I would now use as the CO of a

1 cutter to get underway. So I wasn't very -- looking at weather in
2 a detailed form. But we looked -- we used applications like Windy
3 and then looked at a weather buoy. I can't recall what that exact
4 data is -- that I was looking at from those two sources.

5 Q. Okay. You actually brought up a point that I missed. Can
6 you describe, briefly, the relationship between the -- or who
7 owned the vessel at that point and what was going on with people
8 on board?

9 A. Yep. So Bollinger was the -- Bollinger Shipyard was
10 responsible for all things of the Cutter Glenn Harris at that
11 time. At that time I was responsible for the crew. So the
12 morning of the ship, the unmooring ship, driving the, the plan,
13 the navigation, and all of that is under the -- was under the
14 responsibility of Bollinger. Specifically the master captain was
15 Captain Leonard Guidry. He was the sea trial master and captain
16 of the vessel and is the mastering captain for majority of the
17 FRCs.

18 Q. Okay. The bridge of the FRC, what do you have for radio
19 sources up there? Is it our weather fax?

20 A. We have the ability to tune to a radio station, but we do not
21 have a printout or a way to receive a weather fax, like for
22 example on the NS -- the National Security Cutter has an entire
23 system that receives that type of data.

24 Q. How about a navtex receiver?

25 A. Can you say that again, sir?

1 Q. Have you ever heard of a navtex receiver?

2 A. No, sir.

3 Q. Okay. Do you remember seeing -- hearing about a special --
4 any special marine warnings that were issued starting at noon that
5 day?

6 A. No, sir.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. I would say -- when I say hear, I wasn't in a mental state to
9 be on the lookout and hearing or paying attention to those things.

10 Q. Of course. Okay. So what I'd like to do now is -- just as
11 much detail as you can remember, just recount the -- from the time
12 of the response or the distress call to when you left the scene.
13 In fact I'll turn my camera off, so you don't have distractions.
14 Just talk to the computer and let us know what happened out there.

15 A. Yes, sir. So we were (indiscernible) to get underway from
16 the Bollinger Shipyards volunteer shipyards pier give or take
17 around 1300 local that day.

18 The reason why it was so late is that some of our training
19 was prescribed to do evening ops so the plan was to spend most of
20 the afternoon and into the evening conducting training.

21 We had gotten underway from the Port of Fourchon, through the
22 channel and we went -- we turned left and then I think went to the
23 East, right outside of the Grand Isles waterfront there and that's
24 where we, kind of, we were positioning ourselves through training.

25 When we arrived into a little safe haven area away from a lot

1 of the rigs that were out there, that is when the weather system
2 had came over top of us and we saw it on radar and it approaching.

3 We began our training and went into passing control of the
4 ship to various watchstanders and then the weather system had come
5 on top of us pretty quickly at that point.

6 The weather system was very cumbersome and it definitely
7 engulfed us. Our visibility have reduced all the way to a point
8 where we could barely see the bow of our cutter.

9 At that point we were also observing winds ranging from 50
10 miles per hour up to 80 miles per hour locally on board the
11 cutter. Our visibility was reduced because of the rain and at
12 that point is when -- as time had just generally began as that
13 system stalled over top of us, is when we started to hear and
14 queue into a lot of the other merchant vessels in need for
15 support.

16 So there was a handful of, sounded like, crew boats or
17 tugboats that couldn't -- that were a little late with getting
18 into safe haven. So we were closely monitoring as we were station
19 keeping and keeping our bow into the weather. We were just
20 listening to some other vessels struggling with fighting into the
21 elements and getting into safe haven.

22 I think, eventually, all of them that we were able to listen
23 to either had a support vessel there with them, or the weather had
24 subsided to a point where they were able to get into a, for
25 example, Grand Haven or Grand Isles, excuse me.

1 When the system had, kind of, gone over the top of us and
2 visibility starting to improve, we heard from a merchant vessel
3 that was out there. I think it was the merchant vessel Rockfish,
4 that there was an overturn platform.

5 At that point we were roughly five nautical miles away, we
6 were barely in visual range of that. We were repositioning to,
7 kind of, assist or slash identify what was actually happening.

8 When we had gotten closer and arrived on scene, if you will,
9 was when we -- one of my crew members were on the cutter's forward
10 looking infrared camera and FLIR camera. And we were about two
11 miles away from the rig at this point and the camera was what
12 helped us identify that there were people on the overturned rig.

13 We were, at that point, just remaining quiet because on the
14 radio there was a lot of other merchant vessels that were closer
15 into the rig and, kind of, down swell and they were finding a lot
16 of debris in the water, and so we were just trying to listen to
17 them and hear what reports they had.

18 Once we identified that there were folks on board the rig,
19 was when we -- the Captain Guidry decided to insert the cutter
20 into the case at that point and into the scenario.

21 As we were able to get a clearer picture, we were able to
22 identify five individuals climbing on the overturned rig, on the
23 white part of superstructure, taking shelter from the waves that
24 were hitting the structure at that time. I'm going to pause there
25 just to see if there's any questions before proceeding forward.

1 Q. Of course. Thank you, Captain. So just to confirm that the
2 first distress call you heard was the Rockfish's, for this
3 incident. You were responding to the Rockfish and not some other
4 tasking.

5 A. Yes. That is correct, sir. We heard nothing from the actual
6 vessel that overturned, the liftboat, or anyone else. The
7 Rockfish was -- I'm pretty confident it was the Rockfish was the
8 one that made the initial report, kind of, to follow the vessels
9 in the area that there was an overturned liftboat.

10 Q. Okay. And can you tell me a little bit about the liftboat's
11 condition when you arrived, what position it was in, and how much
12 of the superstructure was exposed?

13 A. Yeah. So the -- I still to this day can't -- I can't do a
14 good job of telling which sides the forward or port, the starboard
15 side of the liftboat. But there was a corner of the liftboat --
16 I'm unassuming the liftboat is more of a square, but there's a
17 corner of the liftboat that one of its spuds that were protruding
18 out of the water, and that's what you can see in most photos.

19 In terms of the level -- thanks for providing that. In terms
20 of what could be seen, there is the white superstructure --trying
21 to make this a little bit bigger.

22 Q. For the record we're looking at the -- an outboard profile of
23 the Seacor Power, which I've inverted and flipped horizontally, so
24 it actually looks like the port side.

25 A. Yeah. So the white superstructure, that I think -- which is

1 level 2 that top level underneath, I think that's the bridge, was
2 the -- what could be -- what was seen. The (indiscernible) --
3 even the bridge was a bit in the water and those windows were
4 being splashed by the waves. It was just about that first deck
5 that looked to be -- first to second deck to looked to be out of
6 the water.

7 Q. So when you say the first and second deck, you mean what the
8 Coast Guard would call the main deck and the oh-one deck.

9 A. No. I'm working my way down from the top of the master --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- and that first check down, first or second deck down.

12 Q. Okay. And where were these five survivors at that time?

13 A. So I would say -- it's kind of hard to tell from this image,
14 I know there's a few local or a few photos that were released from
15 -- released into the media that provide a little bit better
16 description. But I think it's between the first and the second
17 deck, that ladder -- behind that ladder is where there was a bit
18 of a covey, if you will, that they were able to take shelter
19 behind.

20 Q. So can you see my mouse? Right here, is that what you're
21 talking about?

22 A. Down -- or sorry. Higher.

23 Q. Oh, okay.

24 A. Higher in the rig, yeah.

25 Q. This is the (indiscernible) hole here. This is what they

1 call the main deck. There's a door to the galley here.

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. And forward of that is a door that goes forward into the
4 engine room. You can't actually see the door on this drawing.

5 A. Yeah, yeah. That that makes sense now. I just re-looked at
6 a photo. So I would say that main deck area where your -- that
7 ladder was definitely, kind of, a hiding spot that they were using
8 to tuck themselves into a corner.

9 Q. Okay. Were these doors -- any of them open when you arrived?

10 A. So it was hard for us tell that. It was definitely later, I
11 think, and I'll get to this later in the narrative --

12 Q. Sure.

13 A. -- but there was a hatch that was opened by the two remaining
14 survivors, hard to tell what hatch that goes to or what it's for.

15 MR. MUISE: Okay. Somebody else had a question, let's see.

16 MR. [REDACTED] I think it was Drew.

17 MR. MUISE: Sorry. Drew, go ahead.

18 BY MR. EHLERS:

19 Q. Yeah. And sorry, I'm going to back play up here just a
20 little bit and go through some questions. You mentioned doing a -
21 - looking at the weather and I think doing a risk assessment. Was
22 -- when you were looking at that weather information, was that
23 something internal to your Coast Guard crew or was that something
24 you did with the Bollinger crew?

25 A. Yeah. So the conversation that we had -- we had two

1 conversations, one was with my crew. My crew was a bit concerned
2 about, you know, risk versus gain, this being training, it was our
3 last day in Bollinger. So there was just -- there was some angst
4 amongst my crew that I wanted to leave and give them a bit of a
5 certainty.

6 And when we did our overall safety brief with all hands, it
7 was talked about by Captain Guidry about, you know, we're not
8 going to continue to stay out there if they think that things
9 become burdensome or we're not able to complete training, so and
10 it was often in two different places.

11 It definitely didn't get the level of scope that, you know,
12 Coast Guard operations usually gives to risk assessment but
13 that's, you know, that was -- it wasn't our cutter, it wasn't our
14 risk assessment to make.

15 Q. Okay. All right. And did you have any authority to, I'll
16 call it stop-work authority, when it comes to these training
17 voyages?

18 A. Yeah. I felt like I had a say, and I had an authority to
19 make a comment or make a decision to Captain Guidry if I felt or
20 if I was getting levels of uncomfortable and uncomfortableness
21 from the crew, (indiscernible).

22 Q. Okay. And fast forwarding to when the system hit, you
23 mentioned the whiteout conditions or visibility going down. Do
24 you have a sense of what the winds were at that point?

25 A. Yeah. And a whiteout is a really good word to describe it.

1 I would, you know, I would also throw a phrase of a true
2 definition of a squall. But winds ranged from -- at the start of
3 on scene there from 50 to 80 mile per hour winds on the least
4 locally observed on board the cutter when it first came over. As
5 the night had moved forward, we continued to see 35 to 40 knot
6 winds went alongside the rig.

7 Q. Okay. So you'd say about the time the accident happened, 50
8 to 80 knot winds?

9 A. I don't know the time -- the exact time of when the boat
10 capsized. But when we were in whiteout conditions, it was -- we
11 saw 80 knot winds.

12 Q. Okay. And I believe you said this, but correct me if I'm
13 wrong, you were about 5 miles away from where the accident
14 location was at the time that the winds hit. Is that correct or?

15 A. Yes. So by the time that we could get our, kind of, our
16 clarity of seeing where we were, and that's when the motor vessel
17 Rockfish reported that the boat was overturned. We were -- from
18 that -- from Rockfish, where about five nautical miles away.

19 Q. Okay. And how long would you say the heavy rains and the
20 wind lasted? The period that, again, the squall hit to the time
21 that you were able to regain your bearings?

22 A. I would say that that experience was from 30 to 45 minutes of
23 a pretty cool whiteout squall condition.

24 Q. Okay. And I believe you said prior to that squall hitting,
25 Coast Guard folks were taking turns at the controls and, correct

1 me if I'm wrong, did -- number one, is that correct? And number
2 two, did the Bollinger crew take back control -- take the controls
3 once the squall hit?

4 A. Yes, sir. So we (indiscernible) my Coast Guard crew were
5 giving controls of the cutter to the (indiscernible) as we were
6 making our way through the squall. At the time that we heard the
7 report of the liftboat, that is when Bollinger took over controls.

8 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. Thank you very much.

9 MR. MUISE: Mike Richards, you had a question?

10 MR. RICHARDS: Yes, sir. Mike Richards, NTSB.

11 BY MR. RICHARDS:

12 Q. I don't think you mentioned sea state. Do you have an
13 assessment of what seas were while you were in the white out
14 conditions, specifically, (indiscernible) during the squall?

15 A. Yeah. So when we were -- when we had gotten underway, we
16 were looking at about one to three foot of waves, no major swells
17 of any sorts. When we got into the squall, those waves had picked
18 up to just wave tops here, had picked up to about four-to-five-
19 foot waves, still no swells.

20 By the time we got to the liftboat, we were -- we saw a good
21 amount of swell developing, that developed all the way into a 6-
22 foot swell with waves on top.

23 Q. So this was -- if you were in whiteout conditions for about
24 45 minutes, the swells you say developed at least 45 minutes after
25 the initial impact of the squall.

1 A. Yes. When we first got underway, and when we first got hit
2 by the squall, we didn't have any -- nothing more than a notable
3 swell, so I would say there was nothing more than a two-foot
4 swell. When the swell came through, it just produced a lot of
5 waves, bigger waves, messy, you know, kind of, white chop waves
6 that were in that 4-foot category. By the time we had
7 repositioned and, kind of --

8 MR. EHLERS: Marcel, I lost him.

9 MR. MUISE: Yeah. I lost him too. Give him a minute.

10 MR. EHLERS: Okay. We may have to have him repeat that.

11 MR. [REDACTED] I think I'm back; I think I dropped there for
12 a minute.

13 MR. MUISE: Sure. Go ahead. We lost you when you were
14 talking about the sea state.

15 BY MR. EHLERS:

16 Q. Yes, sir. So you when you were -- we can't see you, but we
17 can hear you, and you were in the middle of describing the
18 evolution of sea state as you experienced from the initial squall
19 event through the (indiscernible).

20 A. Yes, sir. So during this, when we had first arrived to our
21 training box, we likely saw a swell of about 1 to 2 feet waves,
22 about one to two. When this squall came over top, we saw a grow
23 in wave height, up to the four to five category. We weren't
24 really seeing a big swell at that time. We were seeing -- we were
25 feeling a lot of sea wave and a lot of wind pressure, by the time

1 or visibility cleared --

2 MR. EHLERS: Oh, he always gets to that point and then we
3 lose him, must be important.

4 MR. [REDACTED] Hello.

5 MR. MUISE: Hey, Captain.

6 BY MR. [REDACTED]

7 A. So I think I know where you guys lost me there, it was, kind
8 of, the transition from when the squall became an issue with us.
9 So by the time that 45 minutes of being in a whiteout condition to
10 learning about the liftboat, swells were generating fast. By the
11 time we had got into the liftboat, we were then looking at about a
12 four to a five-foot swell.

13 And I want to point something out, that we were in two
14 different sections of water. So our training ground was a little
15 bit closer aboard the shore, whereas the liftboat was out in
16 deeper water than where we were initially, where we were initially
17 were hit by the squall.

18 Q. Okay. Thank you. This is really helpful. You had said that
19 you had been anticipating by the (indiscernible), 30 to 40 knot or
20 mile per hour winds, but I don't think you said what type of seas
21 were you expecting. Were you expecting one to two? Do you know,
22 Marcel, I don't know if video is not required, it might help if he
23 used the audio phone.

24 MR. MUISE: Yeah. Yeah. I agree, maybe it'll help with
25 bandwidth if we secure the video on his end.

1 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Sir, if you can hear us, we've lost you.
2 You may want to re-connect by phone.

3 Hey, Marcel. Try sending him a chat and just ask him to call
4 in (indiscernible).

5 MR. MUISE: Yeah.

6 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Good afternoon. This is [REDACTED]
7 Commander [REDACTED]. I'll pass him the message and the call-in code
8 and have him call in on top of the video.

9 MR. MUISE: Okay. Thanks, Commander.

10 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: And Marcel, I have just a few questions, but
11 I'll make him quick because I know now we're starting to run long
12 and there's some other people who want to ask questions.

13 MS. PHILLIPS: While we're waiting, Marcel, he mentioned he's
14 looking at a photo. Do you know if we have the photo he's looking
15 at?

16 MR. MUISE: I don't know, actually. Good question.

17 MS. PHILLIPS: I'll ask him if --

18 MR. [REDACTED] I'm back online if that helps.

19 MR. MUISE: Sure. Lieutenant [REDACTED] lets -- you can
20 secure your camera, maybe that'll help with the bandwidth if
21 that's the problem and we'll just go with audio.

22 MR. [REDACTED] Yeah. I'm going to go ahead and try to get
23 the meeting thing back up and then I'll also have my phone line on
24 as well if I get dropped again so there's no loss, I'll just
25 transition to that, if that's all right.

1 MR. MUISE: Okay. Roger that. So go ahead, Mike Richards.

2 BY MR. RICHARDS:

3 Q. Okay. Are you there?

4 A. Yes, sir.

5 Q. Okay. Sorry. There's other people have questions. I'll
6 wrap these up pretty quick. But I think the question is, briefly,
7 what seas were you anticipating before departure?

8 A. I think we were anticipating for that system that was going
9 to come through about 3-to-4-foot seas, which we were comfortable
10 with proceeding for the training.

11 Q. Okay. So you were expecting 30 to 40 knot winds. The seas
12 you just mentioned, to me a squall is a more particular type of
13 events characterized by high winds, heavy rain, it, qualitatively,
14 it makes an intense impact if you're out on the water. So my
15 question to you is based on the forecast information you had
16 looked at, were you anticipating a squall?

17 A. No, sir.

18 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. That's all for me now, Marcel.

19 MR. MUISE: Okay. Captain Phillips?

20 MS. PHILLIPS: Good afternoon. Tracy Phillips.

21 MR. [REDACTED] Yes, ma'am.

22 BY MS. PHILLIPS:

23 Q. When you heard about the weather before you got underway, did
24 the Bollinger captain show you a written weather report, or did he
25 have (indiscernible) whether --

1 A. That's my fault, sorry.

2 Q. Did he just, kind of, verbally talk with you about the
3 weather forecast?

4 A. Just verbally talked, nothing -- we didn't look at any
5 products or anything of that sort.

6 Q. And you don't know if he had a written (indiscernible)?

7 A. No, I do not.

8 Q. Okay. You mentioned the wind speeds that you saw that day
9 between 50 and 80. Was that in miles per hour or knot? What
10 would you --

11 A. That's in knots, ma'am. Off of the tools that we have on
12 board the cutter.

13 Q. Knots, okay. Thank you. And I think you said you were
14 station keeping when the squall was coming through. Is that
15 right?

16 A. Yes, ma'am. We watched the squall approach us on radar and
17 by the time it got into us, the wind was so strong that we needed
18 to put our bow into it or we would have been set very quickly in a
19 dangerous direction so yes, ma'am.

20 Q. So what was your heading against when the wind hit or when
21 you were going into the winds. Do you remember or what general
22 direction --

23 A. I would say the general direction was to the East.

24 Q. So you were pointing --

25 A. Into the wind.

1 Q. (indiscernible).

2 A. We were pointed into the wind and I couldn't give you a
3 direct bearing, but I want to say it was in an easterly direction.
4 We were pointed in an easterly direction.

5 Q. Okay. And you had mentioned that you were looking at a photo
6 just now.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Can you tell us what photo that we're looking at?

9 A. Yes, ma'am. It was just one of the press releases released
10 by, I think it was the first press release released by District 8
11 or Sector New Orleans. It was just helping me orientate myself to
12 what we were seeing that night and that I have a better, clearer
13 way to answer the earlier questions about where on the deck for
14 when we get there so.

15 Q. Great. Okay. Thanks. Do you know if you or any of your
16 crew took any pictures of the capsized vessel that day?

17 A. Yes ma'am. Our crew members had taken photos and all of
18 those photos have been provided to District 8 and Sector New
19 Orleans public affairs.

20 MS. PHILLIPS: Okay. Thank you. That's all the question I
21 have.

22 MR. MUISE: Okay. Thank you, Captain. ABS and then NCOE and
23 then we'll move on with the story. So go ahead, John.

24 MR. PRESTON: Yes, Captain -- or Lieutenant.

25 BY MR. PRESTON:

1 Q. While you were seeing the storm come on the radar and going
2 through, did you hear any notices over the radio about the
3 oncoming weather?

4 A. No, sir.

5 Q. So and no pan-pan notices or anything like that?

6 A. Nothing that stood out, sir.

7 MR. PRESTON: Okay. Thank you.

8 BY MR. MUISE:

9 Q. And just to clarify, Lieutenant, did you hear the UMIB issued
10 by New Orleans? This would have been about 10 minutes after the
11 distress call?

12 A. Did I hear --

13 Q. The urgent marine information broadcasts?

14 A. About vessels in distress?

15 Q. This specific vessel in distress.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I -- there were many released by Sector New Orleans. There
19 was -- there was a vessel that had lost power outside of the
20 entrance to Grand Isle, and then there was this liftboat.

21 MR. MUISE: Okay. Go ahead, [REDACTED] with NCOE.

22 MR. [REDACTED] Yes. Hello, Lieutenant.

23 BY MR. [REDACTED]

24 Q. You stated that or right before we lost you on video, it was
25 talking about the location of (indiscernible) to the location of

1 the liftboat. Can you describe that? I believe you said
2 (indiscernible) inward?

3 A. Yes, sir. We were further to the East, a little bit closer
4 to the entrance of the Grand Isle. The -- over and in a little
5 bit further in, kind of, when you get underway a little bit in
6 more open ocean, there's a lot more rigs that are out there closer
7 in a little bit clearer water for us to train.

8 When we found and received the report of the overturned
9 liftboat, it was roughly, I would say, five nautical miles to our
10 -- was it was (indiscernible) to be five nautical miles to the
11 West and a little bit Southwest, and it looked a little bit more
12 offshore in deeper water.

13 We were initially started training in, I think, it was about
14 around 30 to 40 foot of water. I think the liftboat was in about
15 50 to 60 foot of water, I might be a little off on the liftboat
16 location. But we were definitely in closer to shore of where were
17 planning to conduct training.

18 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. Right. Yeah. That's what I was curious
19 about was the water depth and the training location versus at the
20 scene of the accident as well. So that's all I got. Thank you.

21 MR. MUISE: Okay. Thank you, [REDACTED] Michael Cenac, can you
22 hold off on your question so we can get to the end. I'd like to
23 continue with the timeline.

24 BY MR. MUISE:

25 A. So I think I took a pause at us arriving on scene and finding

1 the five persons on the overturned vessel.

2 Q. Yes, sir.

3 A. When we had arrived on scene, we slowly were able to identify
4 that were five people. It took a while for us to find and
5 identify all those members. Only one person at that time had a
6 personal floatation device on.

7 We were upswell, so we were to the East of the liftboat at
8 that point, so we were in a bad position and we needed to come
9 about and get ourselves into the weather.

10 When we had identified that there were personnel on the rig,
11 the Bollinger sea trial crew made an attempt to launch their small
12 boat pretty early upon our rival.

13 They launched their small boat. The small boat was able to
14 get near the rig but wasn't able to get close and really get onto
15 the rig in a rescue manner, and the people were -- the Bollinger
16 crew returned, and the captain recovered the small boat.

17 I would say at that point was when it became apparent that
18 the swell height had increased dramatically. It was apparent that
19 from the way the small boat was riding in the water, it was clear
20 that we were looking at 5-to-6-foot swells at that time.

21 We had recovered the small boat and we positioned ourselves a
22 little bit more down down swell of the rig and continued to
23 evaluate the situation.

24 We made an attempts to hail via the loudhailer upwind to try
25 to reach out to the folks on the rig. We had no means to receive

1 communication back from them. We were trying to direct them to
2 put flotation devices on.

3 As the scenario -- situation developed and we were down
4 swell, we could see on the rig that the five members were losing
5 -- when I say losing, I mean by waves, kind of, a safe haven area
6 to be. And I have a Zulu time on the timeline that we have here
7 of went things started to happen.

8 So we had three merchant vessels that were further down swell
9 from us that were finding flotation devices and life rafts, and
10 they were searching in those. The motor vessel, Atara, found a
11 person in the water. They were unable to retrieve that person in
12 the water, so the motor vessel Elise Mary came alongside to
13 assist, I think Elise Mary had a shallower freeboard to get that
14 person on board.

15 At that time, all these vessels were losing communications
16 with sector -- Coast Guard Sector New Orleans. So we ended up
17 taking on communications and the coordination's there locally and
18 pushing that and sharing that with Sector New Orleans relaying
19 information.

20 At that time there was a local, it was either a motor vessel
21 Rockfish or another sister platform had informed us that the
22 capacity of the motor vessel Seacor Power was 18 persons
23 (indiscernible) capacity. The person that was rescued from the
24 water had informed us that the (indiscernible) from the Elise Mary
25 that (indiscernible) was there was a possibility of 17 persons on

1 board.

2 There then was the motor vessel, Christian Chouest, that
3 found or located another person in the water. They were able to
4 recover that person, we relayed information on that. And at that
5 time about 2300 Zulu was when we observed -- we maintained --
6 through all of this, we maintained position right off of the
7 liftboat and as close a fashion as we could, as Captain Guidry
8 felt comfortable with. And we had our FLIR looking at the five
9 individuals on board of the platform.

10 At 2300 Zulu was when we observed one person fall into the
11 water, and that's when we drove into and positioned ourselves in a
12 way where we could rescue and recover that person from the water,
13 we did. That person did not have a flotation device.

14 Shortly after that was when motor vessel Cape Cod observed
15 another person in the water, rescued and was able to recover them.
16 The two Coast Guard 45 medium response small boats responded to
17 the scene from station -- Coast Guard station, Grand Isle. They
18 were able to be a little bit more into the rig than we were. At
19 that time that's when the fourth member on the liftboat had
20 entered the water.

21 When the 45 was in a good position to recover that person
22 from the water -- was the best position, and that person that they
23 recovered was one of them that had a severe wound that needed to
24 be evacuated to EMS and they did so. And the second Coast Guard
25 response boat, the 45, had come and relieved the other one up

1 close and tight of the overturned rig and we were a little bit
2 offset.

3 So at this time there were three survivors still remaining on
4 the rig and we were closely approaching sunset. The -- we were
5 informed that we were able to get a Bristow helicopter on scene
6 from Sector New Orleans and from what I understand, that's a
7 commercial rescue company. And they arrived on scene with hoist
8 capability and a hoist swimmer or rescue men that could be lowered
9 down; they arrived on scene.

10 Due to the orientation of the platform, it was hard for them
11 to identify where the individuals were, they needed to do a few
12 orbits. And at this time it was night, so we were using our
13 spotlights to provide them direction and then be able to maintain
14 visual of the folks on the rig, three remaining.

15 We -- they made an attempt to lower their swimmer and their
16 swimmer was able to touch the hole in the rig but wasn't able to
17 really go underneath the hole in the rig and get to where those
18 survivors were. When I sat underneath, I mean things were
19 inversed -- were capsized at that point, so when I say underneath,
20 I mean not underneath the hole against the main deck of the rig.

21 They -- we were able to lower a bag with a radio and
22 flotation devices for the three remaining survivors. It took them
23 a while for them to up on the radio, but they eventually did, and
24 we took over communications directly with the survivors at that
25 time. And I'll go ahead and pause there.

1 A. Okay. That's actually very helpful, Lieutenant. I had some
2 confusion about how many, four or five people but I think I
3 understand the story now. Can you -- and this might be a
4 difficult question but if you were to explain to the lay person,
5 somebody who's never been to sea before, how would you explain why
6 the FRC couldn't get any closer to within heaving line range?

7 A. So I would say the reason is there -- it was unclear of the
8 condition of the water surrounding the rig. So we -- there was --
9 it was unclear to know if our approach would have hit another spud
10 or if we would hit crane.

11 We were not familiar with what was on the approaching water,
12 if that water was clear to get any closer. There was a high
13 likelihood that we -- the cutter could have drove right over the
14 top of another spud or the crane that was on that lift platform.
15 Does that answer your question?

16 Q. It does, thank you. And I asked about doors earlier, but I
17 didn't get to the crane. Where was the crane that port side crane
18 when you arrived?

19 A. When we arrived, I don't recall seeing a crane at all. I
20 mean, we may have seen a corner of the crane but as I look at the
21 photo again, yeah there -- we didn't see any cranes. We only
22 could see one of the spuds in the corner, and a section of that
23 pilot house where that -- the superstructure on the deck. We
24 could not see any crane. We would see railings. We could see
25 railings for the main deck, but we could not see any crane.

1 Q. Okay. So similar question about your small boat, can you
2 explain too, again, the lay person who's ever been in a small boat
3 before. Why was it that you couldn't get the over the horizon
4 boat close enough to the liftboat?

5 A. Yeah. So I wasn't driving the small boat, so I couldn't
6 speak directly to that. But the condition -- the weather
7 conditions at that point were so cumbersome and so dangerous that
8 a small boat of that tonnage, of that weight, is a bobber and
9 could get thrashed against that rig very quickly and aggressively.

10 Q. Okay. So of the five -- the first three that went in the
11 water, one of them was one that you recovered?

12 A. So the first -- yeah. The three -- we know that three went
13 in the water. I haven't talked about the third. But the two that
14 went in the water that I mentioned, the first one was recovered by
15 us, yes.

16 Q. Okay. I'll tell you what, I'll let you continue with your
17 story from there. Go ahead.

18 A. Okay. So there were three crew members remaining, they had
19 flotation devices at this time, and they had radio communications
20 with us. The helicopter needed to return for fuel for endurance
21 and we remained on scene. At this -- for us there on scene all we
22 had was the Coast Guard cutter, Glenn Harris, and a 45. So we
23 were attempting to identify what could we do in that time and
24 there wasn't anything safe for us to approach, and so we just
25 continued to monitor and watch to see if somebody had gone in the

1 water.

2 Unfortunately during this time, when the helicopter was away
3 was when the third person went into the water. And when I say
4 went into the water for all three of these individuals, it was
5 unclear if they had done it by choice, or if they had been swept
6 away, or been forced into the water.

7 We observed from the FLIR that the third person had gone in
8 the water, but we weren't able to maintain -- it was at night, we
9 weren't able to maintain visual of that person in the water. It
10 is unknown if that person came up from the water. So no clarity
11 other than us seeing him just being swept away from that point.

12 Moving from there, we tried to search the water. The down
13 swell run, the drift of the sea conditions for the person in the
14 water and both the 45 and us weren't able to identify anybody or
15 anything in the water.

16 Moving forward, we continued to maintain communications with
17 the two members on board, and that's when things started to get
18 challenging as the -- we observed the weather shift further to the
19 South or more southernly and when it -- when that happened, it --
20 their current lee or area of protection became more exposed, so
21 they were losing protection on the external decks and the wave
22 condition towards or onto the platform was becoming more violent
23 and increasing.

24 The Bristow helicopter returned, and we were still able to
25 have communications with the two survivors at this point. They

1 were entertaining a series of many opportunities to try to rescue
2 them, but they were not -- especially as the weather had shifted
3 more southernly, just became even more dangerous with the amount
4 of overhangs and railings.

5 The Bristow had a conversation with the survivors about
6 seeking shelter and that's when we observed on the FLIR, the
7 opening of a hatch or a door, unknown exactly what that hatch goes
8 to or where that -- where and what that was for, but we only saw
9 one person move. The Bristow made it sound as if both of them
10 entered that space and sought shelter as the conditions were
11 shifting and increasing. When I say increasing, I mean wave
12 height and in violence, I don't mean wind. Wind was not
13 increasing, wind at that point was sustaining 35 to 49 winds.

14 At this point was towards our, we continued to maintain on
15 scene but we -- Captain Guidry was approaching his air endurance
16 limitations, so yes, we had a Coast Guard crew on board, but we
17 weren't yet trained and ready to take over command of that vessel,
18 and captain Guidry only had a crew of one -- a crew of his sea
19 trial crew. So he needed to make the decision about endurance and
20 stamina for the rest of the night, and he, eventually, at this
21 point, give or take, you know, maybe 30 minutes was when he made
22 the decision that they -- that he needed to head in.

23 So we had passed all information to Sector New Orleans.
24 Coast Guard 65 had arrived on scene and that last 65 helicopter, a
25 Dolphin helicopter arrived on scene and, kind of, took over

1 control -- regional control of that and assessed it and we passed
2 information to them.

3 There was still a handful of merchant vessels that were
4 searching the waters in the area. And we, eventually, around 04
5 Zulu had made the decision that we were -- we needed to head in
6 for the Port of Fourchon.

7 Q. Okay. Thank you again for that, Captain. So that decision
8 to head back in was more of an insurance thing it wasn't about
9 food, fuel, or water?

10 A. It was an endurance thing. Yes, sir.

11 Q. Okay. I have a few follow-ups about the crew on the
12 liftboat. If that hatch that you described that they sought
13 shelter in, was that a little bit forward?

14 A. Yeah. It was -- if you -- can you show that --
15 (Crosstalk)

16 Q. I could bring up that -- if I can figure out how to do that
17 again. Okay. Can you see that?

18 A. Yep.

19 Q. Okay. There is a hatch here.

20 A. Yeah, yeah. It's unclear to me if it was a deck hatch there
21 or if it was a bulkhead door.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. But there was -- in that region there is a hatch that we saw
24 that opened and that they went into.

25 Q. Okay. And the way the liftboat landed was more of a

1 southeasterly heading or more southerly heading.

2 A. I would say more southeasterly, yes.

3 Q. Okay. And then I heard you say that the waves started to
4 shift, or wind started to shift or both to the South. that would
5 make since --

6 A. So I would say --

7 Q. -- that this would provide some shelter.

8 A. Yeah. I would say that it was definitely favoring a little
9 bit more southerly, it had a little bit of an East head to it, the
10 way that the deck was facing. But the way the flat deck was
11 facing at that time, was definitely more on the southerly.

12 So when things had first started, they were able to hide
13 behind superstructure there where you have things circled and
14 that's when things had shifted that, that base. Imagine that the
15 actual working deck was a wall, that became the backboard, pretty
16 much, of the swells as they shifted to the South, so that's why
17 things became a lot more violent.

18 Q. Okay. The patient that you recovered, a few questions about
19 him. How did you get him on board?

20 A. So we deployed a series of life rings and heaving lines. We
21 were able to get connected to him and we helped haul him into the
22 hole. We had a pilot's ladder over the side, once he was able to
23 recover his wrath and he felt strong enough, he just needed to
24 stand up on one of the rungs of the pilot ladder, and the crew was
25 able to pull up the rest of the way.

1 Q. Okay. Did he say that how he egressed from the liftboat?

2 A. He did not.

3 Q. Okay. I know your timeline says that he was treated for
4 shock. Is there any other medical treatment that you gave him?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Is there -- does the Coast Guard have like a patient contact
7 report, where you describe treating the victims of SAR cases,
8 things like vital signs, sign symptoms?

9 A. We didn't take any medical conditions or symptoms of those
10 sorts from him.

11 Q. Okay. The -- so the effort -- did you have a whole crew,
12 like your whole crew on board or were you shorthanded?

13 A. Yes, sir. We had -- at that time we had 27 members on board.

14 Q. So is there an instruction somewhere that says how much --
15 what kind of medical training people have to have in your crew?
16 Like for example, you know, A 154 needs two EMTs and a 110 needs
17 one 45 (indiscernible) first aid.

18 A. Yeah. So, generally, for an FRC we do not have a requirement
19 to have a level of medical operational -- we call that operational
20 medical knowledge. Our crew, from where we're going and tactical
21 combat care, so triaging in combat, but that's the level of
22 medical training that majority of the folks had on board.

23 Q. Do most patrol boats have a stateside -- have a basic EMT
24 onboard?

25 A. No.

1 Q. How about equipment? What's -- is there an instruction
2 somewhere that that says what kind of equipment you have to carry
3 for trauma or any medical?

4 A. Yeah. So for a regular FRC we typically have, kind of, a
5 more increased or a plussed of a first aid. But this was not --
6 this FRC in the condition of equipment on board did not meet Coast
7 Guard standards, it was not yet owned and operated by Coast Guard.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. So the medical level of medical readiness would have been a
10 volunteer standard.

11 Q. And you didn't wind up using any of that anyway. Is that
12 correct?

13 A. Yes, that's correct.

14 Q. Okay. Are you familiar with search and rescue transponders?

15 A. Like EPIRB's?

16 Q. So it's similar, excepts it shows up on your radar screen,
17 your X-Band radar like a -- looks like a RACON.

18 A. SART.

19 Q. Right. So when you arrived on scene, did you remember seeing
20 any of those on your radar?

21 A. No, sir.

22 Q. Okay. The 45s that you were working with, from what I can
23 see, they were transmitting their AIS in a law enforcement mode,
24 so we can't see that information. But can you see that when
25 they're in an LE mode, can other Coast Guard cutters see blue

1 forces? Like and does that affect your capabilities as an on-
2 scene coordinator?

3 A. I don't -- in that scenario, it did not affect our ability to
4 be able to be an on-scene coordinator. But we have other means of
5 maintaining blue force tracking and blue force awareness --
6 situational awareness of other assets in our area.

7 Q. Okay. And my last question for you is -- I'll have one more
8 later but was anybody hurt in your crew? Can you confirm that
9 there's no injuries or any damage to the FRC?

10 A. No. No one hurt and no one hurt on our crew or no damage to
11 the cutter itself.

12 MR. MUISE: Okay. Again thank you, Captain for all the
13 information.

14 MR. [REDACTED] Sure.

15 MR. MUISE: I will open it up to the rest of the -- the rest
16 of my team.

17 MR. [REDACTED] Hey, Lieutenant. This is Lieutenant, junior
18 grade, [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.

19 BY MR. [REDACTED]:

20 Q. A couple of follow up questions for you, sir. First one
21 being can you confirm whether or not you and your crew had
22 undergone ready for sea or ready for operations certifications?

23 A. We did not.

24 Q. Understood. And as the on-scene commander, what type of
25 tasking were you giving to the other search and rescue units under

1 your purview at the time?

2 A. So tasking was -- all the tasking was verified with the
3 Sector New Orleans. But tasking, for example, for the merchant
4 vessels was, kind of, giving them direction and guidance on how to
5 best position and recover the folks that they found in order. If
6 they weren't able to inform us and to provide them flotation
7 devices and get -- to remain on scene and alongside.

8 Regarding the forty -- the Coast Guard assets and the
9 helicopter, the Coast Guard small boats tried to take direction in
10 the way of, you know, positioning themselves as close and as tight
11 to the platform in case that somebody did go in the water and,
12 kind of, relieving each other of that but then also provided them
13 -- putting them off searching pattern.

14 There was one detail that I missed was the piece of a Coast
15 Guard fixed wing, there was a Coast Guard CASA aircraft that was
16 in the area and we had communications with them about, like,
17 identifying a rescue attempt and using life rafts but that wasn't
18 able to be deployed or used. Coordination with the Bristow
19 helicopters was directly with us about trying to either -- trying
20 to get the radio down to them or just identify any means of
21 reaching the survivors.

22 Q. Understood. And that segways to my next question, it was
23 regarding the CASA and their intent to drop the two tethered life
24 raft into the water. So you're saying that that did not happen,
25 sir?

1 A. That did not happen. We felt that it -- that we wanted to do
2 that rescue attempt with the assistance of a 45. And when we were
3 positioning ourselves to make that attempt, was when that third
4 person went in the water.

5 Q. Roger that. And my final question was your FLIR recording
6 the entire time during this evolution?

7 A. Yes.

8 MR. [REDACTED]: All right. Those are all the questions I have.
9 Thank you, sir.

10 MR. MUISE: Okay. Thank you, Victor. Thank you, Victor.
11 Anybody else? Any follow-ups? Okay.

12 BY MR. MUISE:

13 Q. So my -- the last question for you, Captain, and not to make
14 light of it all of, you know, this tragedy but I'm always curious
15 what went well in this scenario. So given the circumstances, is
16 there a piece of equipment, or some training, or a procedure that
17 you found especially useful that you think we should share with
18 the rest of the fleet?

19 A. I think one thing for us for recovering a person in the
20 water, the use of life rings with throw bags or attached heaving
21 lines was greatly useful for our individual rescue. We were
22 challenged in being able to get or just get the survivor to the
23 hole of the cutter. By having and using those tools, it allowed
24 us to, kind of, extend our arm out and get them a life ring and
25 get them an additional floatation assistance and then haul him

1 into us, that was very beneficial and something that was of a huge
2 tool of success.

3 Radio communications I would say was -- would be another
4 thing and I think that's a hard thing to put on a product. But
5 the communication that of a good Samaritan is the merchant vessels
6 in the area was phenomenal, they were highly supportive and
7 maintained great communication with us and Sector New Orleans.

8 For our Coast Guard cutter, that forward, that FLIR, that
9 forward looking infrared camera was the game changer, that was our
10 eyes of being able to be on scene. One, we wouldn't have
11 identified that there were people on the rig so early if we didn't
12 have it. And two, it was really our success to identifying when
13 somebody went into the water, being able to -- trying to maintain
14 that level of clarity and looking into to those folks, with just
15 binoculars, at least from the standpoint of a Coast Guard asset.
16 I think those are a few that really jump out to me, sir.

17 Q. Okay. Is there anything I didn't ask that you think I should
18 know about besides that?

19 A. No, sir.

20 MR. MUISE: Okay. If you could think of anything else later
21 on, you can always reach us through Captain Phillips, or our email
22 addresses is witness@ntsb.gov. Again congratulations on your
23 command and please pass on our sincere thanks to your crew for all
24 their efforts that night.

25 MR. [REDACTED] Thank you, sir. Appreciate that.

1 MR. MUISE: Okay. And with that, it's 1600. I will secure
2 the recording here.

3 MR. EHLERS: And I just want to echo on behalf the NTSB.
4 This is Drew Ehlers the investigator.

5 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

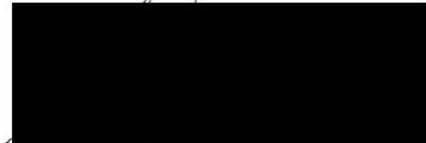
IN THE MATTER OF: CAPSIZING OF THE LIFTBOAT *SEACOR*
 POWER SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON,
 LOUISIANA, ON APRIL 13, 2021
 Interview of Reggie Reynolds

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21MM024

PLACE: Via Microsoft Teams

DATE: April 21, 2021

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Ashley Daumit
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

*

CAPSIZING OF LIFT BOAT *

SEACOR POWER SOUTH OF * Accident No.: DCA21MM024

PORT FOURCHON, LOUISIANA, *

ON APRIL 13, 2021 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: LEONARD GUIDRY, Sea Trail Captain
Bollinger Shipyard

Via telephone

Tuesday,
May 4, 2021



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Transcript Errata

TABLE OF CORRECTIONS FOR TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW WITH: CAPTAIN LEONARD GUIDRY RECORDED ON MAY 4, 2021

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5	16	Vattaglia	Battaglia
6	7	Eddison Schwintz	Edison Chouest
6	14	far sea	FRC
6	25	dalmon	Damen
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8	20	platform	platforms
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9	13	how it worked...	how I worked...
9	16	It's	I
10	1	Vale	Belle
10	21	Ellis	Elmer's
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12	4	the phone, my supervisor	the phone with my supervisor I
12	14	looked	look
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14	22	lost	launched
15	1	Fecedo	Reynolds
15	7	what	that
15	13	appended	pendant
15	15	way	wing
15	19	appended	pendant
15	20	release	lee (leeside)
16	11	heliport	helipad
16	12	heli	lee (leeside)
16	14	heliport	helipad
16	15	half legs	back leg
16	19	(indiscernible)	second
18	10	(indiscernible) Lombardo	Jay Guevara
18	12	seascape	sea state



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Washington, D.C. 20594

Transcript Errata

18	14	FIC	FRC
18	24	(indiscernible)	lee
19	1	They tried (indiscernible) back down.	I tried to back down.
19	7	flare	FLIR
19	17	body	spotty
20	5	to (indiscernible)	the Stim Star IV
20	7	(indiscernible)	Stim Star IV
20	13	inspector	sector
20	19	(indiscernible)	Zachary Louviere
21	5	Stem	Stim
21	10	(indiscernible)	mooring
21	21	trail	trial
22	13	(indiscernible)	pipe fitter
22	16	(indiscernible)	Chand
23	12	(indiscernible)	Louisiana
28	5	(indiscernible)	FRCs
28	6	employ (indiscernible)	voyage plan
28	9	(indiscernible)	on the
29	5	(indiscernible)	a Stokes litter
29	14	SBCAs	SCBAs
30	5	lift	life
30	24	lead	lee
31	7	them and pulled them	him and pulled him
33	14	Dave	they
35	16	won	own

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEEDED.

Initials

Rachael Battaglia

Printed Name of Person providing the above information

Signature of Person providing the above information

06/01/2021

Date

APPEARANCES:

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ANDREW EHLERS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MIKE RICHARDS, Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board

MIKE KUCHARSKI, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

[REDACTED], Recorder
US Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

TRACY PHILLIPS, Chair
US Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

[REDACTED], Member
US Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

JOHN PRESTON, Chief Surveyor Offshore
American Bureau of Shipping

MELISSA HUFFMAN, Warning Coordination Meteorologist
National Weather Service

MICHAEL CENAC, Chief Security Officer
Seacor Power

RACHEL VATTAGLIA
Seacor Power

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:00 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. MUISE: Good morning, this is Marcel Muise with the
4 National Transportation Safety Board. It's 10 a.m. on May the
5 4th, 10 a.m. Eastern time. We are interviewing Captain Guidry
6 with Bollinger Shipyard as part of the investigation into the loss
7 of the *Seacor Power* from April 13th.

8 Mr. Guidry, will you just introduce yourself for us and spell
9 your name?

10 MR. GUIDRY: Yeah, my name is Leonard Guidry; I am the sea
11 trial captain at Bollinger Shipyard.

12 MR. MUISE: And who else is on the line from NTSB? I have
13 everybody's spelling of their names now, so I don't think I need
14 that, just who's on the line? Andrew, first?

15 MR. EHLERS: Good morning, Captain. This is Drew Ehlers; I'm
16 the investigator in charge of the investigation on behalf of the
17 NTSB, thanks for joining us.

18 MR. RICHARDS: And Mike Richards, NTSB meteorology group
19 chairman.

20 MR. MUISE: And from the Coast Guard, please?

21 MS. PHILLIPS: Good morning. I'm Tracy Phillips, P H I L L I
22 P S, I'm the Coast Guard's Chair of the Marine Board of
23 Investigation.

24 MR. [REDACTED] Good morning, Lieutenant [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Coast Guard Marine Investigator.

1 MR. MUISE: [REDACTED] go ahead, please.

2 MR. [REDACTED] Good morning. Sorry, I hit the wrong button.

3 This is [REDACTED] of the Coast Guard, [REDACTED]. Thank you.

4 MR. MUISE: And Lieutenant [REDACTED], are you on the line? No.

5 That's okay, ABS, please.

6 MR. PRESTON: John Preston with the American Bureau of
7 Shipping, J O H N, P R E S T O N.

8 MR. MUISE: And National Weather Service?

9 MR. HUFFMAN: Good morning, this is Melissa Huffman with the
10 National Weather Service.

11 MR. MUISE: And *Seacor* Marine, please?

12 MR. CENAC: Good morning, this is Michael Cenac with *Seacor*
13 *Marine*.

14 MR. MUISE: And Rachel, I didn't catch your last name. I'm
15 sorry.

16 MS. VATTAGLIA: Hi, it's Rachel Vattaglia, V A T T A G L I A.

17 INTERVIEW OF LEONARD GUIDRY

18 BY MR. MUISE:

19 Q. Okay, thank you for joining us. And Captain, just to
20 get started, can you give us a little about your background? What
21 it is you do for Bollinger and how it is you got to be there?

22 A. Yeah, I started working on boats back in 1985, straight
23 out of high school. Been holding a captain's license since March
24 of 1987. I've worked on tug boats, supply boats over the years, I
25 actually worked on lift barges back in '97, '98 for Aries Marine.

1 Been working for Bollinger -- my daddy was a sea trial captain
2 back in the 80s for the 110s that were built here at Bollinger,
3 and 1993 I began working as a contractor with him helping him out
4 doing sea trials at Bollinger. And in 1998, Bollinger hired me
5 full time as their sea trial captain, and since then I've sea
6 trialed all the vessels that they've built here at Bollinger
7 Shipyards, and then I did a couple of stints with Eddison Schwintz
8 offshore between contracts here, took gaps periodically, so I went
9 -- worked for them since then. So yeah, I've been doing all these
10 Coast Guard cutter and Navy PC sea trials here since 1993.

11 Q. Okay. Is your involvement just with the sea trials, or
12 are you involved with the design and outfitting and construction
13 as well?

14 A. Well, yeah partially, especially the far sea project, I
15 was involved in the beginning of this one. Just minor opinions on
16 layout and the such of console layouts and such, but mostly just
17 sea trialing the boats, running them, preliminary testing here in
18 the shipyard prior to getting underway, and in crew training. We
19 also have a heavy crew training part of these contracts, so
20 obviously I have to learn the equipment on the bridge to operate
21 it correctly, so it lends into training. So I do a lot of the
22 pilot house equipment training with the Coast Guard crews also.

23 Q. The FRC, is that an in-house design for Bollinger? Is
24 that something you bought off the shelf?

25 A. The FRC -- it was a dalmon (PH), it was a -- the

1 contract required a proven design, so it's kind of a -- it's a --
2 the hull is definitely a dalmon hull, but then it's modified to
3 suit the contractual requirements for the U.S. Coast Guard.

4 Q. Captain, what I'd like you to do is just tell us your
5 story about that day on April 13th, from the time you left the
6 dock to the time you got back, in as much detail as you can.
7 We've already talked to Captain [REDACTED] but I'd like to hear
8 your perspective of what happened that day. I'm not going to
9 interrupt you, just -- we're really -- none of us were there, so
10 we're really interested in hearing what you saw and experienced
11 that day.

12 A. Yeah, but before I start, you know Captain [REDACTED] he
13 did a great job, you know, helping out. And as far as you know --
14 I'm going to give you some time as I tell you my story, but I know
15 that especially after we got on site at the *Seacor Power*, he had
16 an operations specialist first class on board, and he tasked him
17 with chronicling the timeline from that point, vessel names and
18 the such. So I'm sure he was able to provide you with a much more
19 detailed timeline --

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. Because I was kind of -- I was busy handling the ship,
22 you know --

23 Q. Sure. Of course.

24 A. -- I wasn't really looking at time that well, but I
25 found that on my notes here, I've got times just to kind of help

1 guide me through what we did. So, first off all we were there to
2 do that day is underway training, it was the second of two days
3 that we do for each vessel, underway -- pre-delivery underway
4 training, and what we called this run is the "into the night time
5 run." They're some eight hour scheduled training runs, so we
6 start during daylight savings time at 1300 in the afternoon, but
7 we start out pre-underway briefs. And we typically run until
8 about 2100 into the evening, just to show the crews the
9 characteristics of the boat, the equipment and the such, what it
10 looks like after dark. So that's what we were doing that day. So
11 we arrived in the vessels about 12:30 that afternoon, the 13th of
12 April. At 1300, we commenced are pre-underway safety brief, and
13 agenda -- training agenda briefing with all riding in attendance.
14 We discussed the weather -- approaching weather, the forecast was
15 some random thunder storms with 35 knot winds and seas three to
16 five feet, but the forecast started diminishing afterwards, and we
17 decided that we had time before the weather would approach us to
18 run out to our training location, which is just a few miles east
19 of Port Fourchon off Elmer's Island, where I've been it's kind of
20 an open area where there's no platform, you're right there, so you
21 get a little area to do our training. So that's where -- you
22 know, we decided to go ahead and make our way out there, and let
23 the line of showers pass. To put that into context about the
24 weather that evening, we were in a pattern at that time those few
25 weeks where they had these low pressures coming from west to east

1 periodically every few days, and so it was just another line
2 coming, a line of storms coming through, so we figured we'd just
3 make our way out there and let the line pass, and then continue on
4 with our training on the back side of the line of storms. At
5 approximately 1330, we witnessed the -- while we was doing our
6 slide-offs and the such, the *Seacor Power* did pass us, heading
7 southbound in Bayou la Fourche, and our moor location is at
8 Bollinger Fourchon south yard, in Port Fourchon. It was a topic
9 of discussion with me and crew members of the Coast Guard that
10 were in the pilot house. They're always -- you know, it's an
11 unusual style vessel, so that's typical that these Coast Guard
12 members question those boats, because they're different. So we
13 talked about it and told them how it worked at Aries Marine at one
14 time as a captain, plus we've built lift barges here at Bollinger
15 and have sea trialed numerous lift barges over the years here at
16 Bollinger's. It's kind of explained what kind of work they do,
17 it's a -- the *Seacor Power's* a unique barge in that its crane
18 design and that it tracks around its legs unlike most barges have
19 the cranes on a separate pedestal, so it's just always -- you
20 know, that particular boat is -- it's always interested me, I've
21 been knowing that boat for years, that they had designed it, but -
22 - so it was just a topic of discussion, sort of interesting to
23 note that we saw that and talked about it as it left out. At
24 1400, we got underway after equipment light-offs and pre-underway
25 checks were complete. At approximately 1430, I was outbound in

1 the jetty at Vale Pass. I had kind of caught up to the *Seacor*
2 *Power*, they were at buoys one and two heading offshore. I did
3 mention to the crew members how lift barges are. You have to be
4 careful, usually five foots seas was the rule of thumb always went
5 by, not running it over that, but the forecast wasn't foreseeing
6 more than five foot there towards Port Fourchon anyway. I wasn't
7 sure about anything, I just mentioned to them how -- told another
8 story about how one time, I left out with a lift barge at --
9 jacked up, just out the channel about three days, waiting for
10 weather to pass. Just something lift barges do, and I thought
11 maybe that's what they were planning on doing. I wasn't sure with
12 that, but I knew they were outbound heading south from the jetty
13 at Port Fourchon. I took an east heading, running out like I said
14 to the training location over at Caminada, and we arrived there
15 about 1500 that afternoon, or 3:00 that afternoon, approximate
16 location about three miles south of Caminada Pass. I gave the
17 helm to the crew, Coast Guard crew. Under my supervision, we
18 commenced training. The actual training evolution was a shaft
19 locking training evolution, and the weather was getting close at
20 this point. The line of storms was getting close, and we were
21 tightly secured up there fairly close to the beach there at Ellis
22 Island in clear area. Approximately 1600, the line of
23 thunderstorms reached us. The winds were a lot more than
24 forecasted. I personally witnessed 80 miles per hour -- our 80
25 knot winds on our gauge as we were holding the ship. And the

1 state sustained for a few minutes also, too, it was kind of --
2 kind of took us all by surprise, obviously. Very heavy wash out
3 rain, we just held position, monitoring radar, navigation
4 equipment closely, anticipating the weather will pass. So and --
5 we started hearing distress calls on channel 16 from a couple of
6 other vessels in the nearby area in VHF range. There was a little
7 tug boat right off of the Barataria Pass; it was mostly people
8 that were scared. They were kind of scared of the washed out and
9 heavy wind conditions. But we were listening, again we're mostly
10 taking care of ourselves in this situation with the 80-knot winds.
11 And then at around -- it was about -- again, times are not exact
12 here -- about 1630-ish, we started hearing reports of an
13 overturned lift barge off of Port Fourchon. We started getting
14 coordinates approximately six miles away from us. I immediately
15 knew who they were, given like I said, given that I had just seen
16 them heading outbound right there, the *Seacor Power*. I took the
17 helm from the Coast Guard crew, and I started slowly making my way
18 toward that area. Again, the weather had started to diminish by
19 then, you know the line had passed, the winds had come down
20 probably about 35, 40-knot wind by this time out of the east,
21 northeast. Seas was still about -- and I left out, forgot to
22 mention the sea state -- when I left out, probably about 2- to
23 3-foot seas I guess? And then out of the weather came through you
24 know, it came up to like 3- to 5-ish by this point, and I started
25 making my way towards the -- the rain was slowly diminishing. I

1 called my supervisor at Bollinger Shipyard, Mark Mollen, and I let
2 him know what was going on, and that I was going to go take a look
3 and see what was -- what happened. About 1700, after I got off
4 the phone, my supervisor started getting a visual of the capsized
5 lift barge. Just to note, I heard -- I believe there was another
6 lift barge that was set up on a platform, kind of to the east side
7 of the Power. They saw me heading that way and he got out on
8 channel 16, saying the Coast Guard was on location. So I got on
9 channel 16, I made a statement, just letting people know that we
10 were a pre-commissioned Coast Guard boat being ran by a shipyard
11 crew, and was there to help like any other good Samaritan. You
12 know, it was a unique situation for us given that. Always a
13 little concerned about that, because we have the boats there, they
14 looked like a Coast Guard boat but we're not really a Coast Guard
15 crew; we don't have all that outfitting equipment that a Coast
16 Guard boat would have to be able to help out in these kinds of
17 situations. I did put that statement out on the channel 16 to let
18 these guys know that we were there to help, and we were there. At
19 that point, I told the prospective commanding officer of
20 Lieutenant [REDACTED] that we needed to get a handle on the
21 person in the pilot house and for him to decide who he wanted to
22 help out, as these Coast Guard crews are very experienced but
23 still unqualified on board this particular vessel, plus we don't
24 carry lifesaving equipment that the Coast Guard normally does. I
25 directed my sea trial crew to take lead on small boat rescue

1 operations in the event we could attempt one. Again, this was all
2 preliminary, just upon arriving, because I have a couple of them
3 that are -- one of them especially, like a designated little -- a
4 boat driver, he's a really good small boat driver. So we kind of
5 got a handle on everything, the crew did a great job of helping
6 with the situation, I got -- Lieutenant [REDACTED] handled all the
7 VHF comms with sector, he had an OS1 on board like I say, did a
8 great job recording everything as it went down, keeping us in line
9 with who's who and what was what. About ten minutes later, about
10 1710 I believe, we arrived on scene, there, at the barge. And I
11 slowly set up, I was very concerned about all the debris in the
12 water, the cranes, the lane, it was a tough situation, because you
13 know it was a big barge, and you know you want to get close but
14 you can't get too close because you're not sure where these cranes
15 may have landed, boom crane, booms, legs, stuff like that. But we
16 immediately started to find persons using our infrared camera on
17 board the ship, FRCs, hanging onto a piece of the cabin structure
18 that was sticking out of the water, kind of on the port side of
19 the Power, a kind of forward part of the cabin. The main deck
20 part of the cabin had a little piece of it sticking above that
21 other structure. It was hard for me to tell, I wasn't -- we had a
22 crewmember on the camera looking, holding, training the camera on
23 the spot. But again, I was holding the ship and 40 knot wind was
24 increasing sea state, and I was just focused on holding the ship
25 and maintaining a proper distance at that point. But I did glance

1 over and see the five persons holding onto that section of the
2 cabin there. Again, this time the full angle of the barge, the
3 way it sunk and the angle of the wind, it was kind of more of a
4 easterly wind, which was slowly shifting. It started with a
5 little northeast aspect and then it was east, and then as the
6 evening went on, the wind slowly shifted east maybe a southeast
7 aspect to it, which made it harder as time went on for those guys
8 to hold onto that section of the cabin. They almost had a lead at
9 first, but then it went away after the wind shifted and the seas
10 got rougher as the evening went on. So I decided to go ahead and
11 give the small boat a shot. Got a team together, my two sea trial
12 crew members got in and one of the CHAN instructors -- we also had
13 three instructors from our training group on board with us. So
14 one of those guys, former Coast Guard, he had experience with
15 those kind of things. So those were the three liability wise from
16 Bollinger perspective, I figured would be the best to get in a
17 small boat and go make an attempt. So we launched them, they made
18 their way towards the power. As they got on scene, they quickly
19 realized that the sea state was way too rough and all the
20 structure -- there was no way they could've got anywhere close to
21 where these guys were without endangering themselves. It was
22 already -- honestly, as soon as I lost them, I regretted it.
23 Because it was just too much for that small boat, in that
24 condition. So we got them back, we got them back on the boat
25 safely, thank God. And then like I said, I just -- we -- then

1 Captain Fecedo started handling comms in sector, I kind of
2 directed the -- I kind of set up the FRC as best I could, you
3 know, towards the west side of the barge just in case -- I wanted
4 them to see this, I wanted to get a good view with the camera, but
5 then at the same time, I wanted to be in a position where if one
6 of them was -- got washed off, or fell off, or decided to jump
7 off, what I could've retrieved one, we carry a Jacobs ladder, so I
8 directed the crew to set up the Jacobs ladder, have it ready in
9 case we needed it, set up the vessel, and then sure enough, it was
10 -- I'm not sure, honestly, what time this Zachary Louvier fell
11 off, washed off, jumped off, I'm not sure exactly how he got off
12 the barge, but he got into the water quickly. The FRCs are
13 equipped with a appended controller to plug in, a little handheld
14 controller, quickly -- we had it ready, I went out on the bridge
15 way, in fact you can see on this picture, you see on the -- see I
16 don't even know who took all these pictures to be honest with you,
17 but you see my jean leg. I see my jean in the pictures of us
18 retrieving Zachary out of the water. That's me standing there
19 with the appended controller, holding the ship as best I could
20 with a little release side for him, so we could retrieve him out
21 the water. But thankfully we got him up out the water quickly. I
22 remember thinking, right there, it was -- if only all the rest of
23 them could only just set themselves loose right there, could've
24 picked them all up, probably at that point, because it did get
25 rougher, especially with that shifting more to the south wind

1 condition after that time. So I just stayed there, set up as
2 close as I thought safe to the jack up, and was kind of waiting it
3 out, you know, that other Good Samaritan boats in the distance
4 searching the debris field, they picked up four of the people out
5 the water thankfully, four different boats picked up one person
6 each. I guess it was about 1930-ish, it was a little time before
7 that, sometime between 1900 and 1930, one of the RBMs from Station
8 Grand Isle arrived on scene, and they were able to hold position.
9 They tried, they got in kind of similar to what we did with our
10 small boat, tried to get in really close to them and then realized
11 it was just way too much structure. They had a heliport, that's
12 why the *Seacor Power* went right behind it, right into the heli
13 side, making it -- it was right there. You could see the waves
14 crashing against the heliport, so kind of -- and you couldn't even
15 see the half legs, so I wasn't sure where that thing was. But
16 yeah, they kind of went up close at first and then backed off a
17 little bit safe distance again between me and the lift barge.
18 Just sitting there keeping an eye on the persons and approximately
19 1930, the (indiscernible) of the five persons got into the water
20 and they retrieved that person safely out of the water, that RBM
21 from Station Grand Isle.

22 And then by then it was starting to get dark so what I did
23 then -- and then a second RBM showed up from Station Grand Isle,
24 another one from Station Grand Isle, another RBM showed up. So as
25 it got dark I repositioned myself a little bit more to the south

1 of the barge so that we could keep our -- two of our spotlights
2 shining on the area of the cabin to keep a light on the
3 individuals. And then the two RBMs kind of stayed in position to
4 the -- I guess more to the east side in case one of them would
5 have got in the water so they could have picked them up quickly
6 out the water.

7 Again, the seas were increasing. By then, I would say it was
8 getting pretty rough there as it got dark around like 1930
9 timeframe. It was probably getting up a good six foot -- 6- to
10 8-foot seas by then. Wind was still blowing 35, 40 knots
11 (indiscernible) I was surprised how the rain had passed but the
12 wind just kept blowing hard like that. It was unusual. About
13 2015 or so the Bristow chopper came on scene and immediately tried
14 lowering a rescue swimmer. Again, the angle of the barge
15 (indiscernible) dangling down from a chopper from an aerial
16 perspective, they couldn't really even see the persons as the guy
17 was coming down. And he just made it -- the situation was just --
18 the wind was blowing into the gap of the hand railings on the top
19 of the barge that was sticking out all the way down the deck to
20 where the persons were and the seas were crashing right into
21 there. He made an attempt, tried, and quickly realized there was
22 no way he was going to be able to get to where they were safely
23 with all the debris and the structure of the barge. If he would
24 have tried to get into the water with the waves crashing against
25 him. I mean, it was bad. You could see it on the infrared video

1 how bad the 40-knot winds were just rushing, those waves crashing
2 into that barge, it was horrible.

3 So he went back up into the chopper. They stayed for a
4 little while -- couple minutes later they came over the radio and
5 said that the best thing they could do is go back down and provide
6 them with life jackets and a radio. So they did. They went back
7 down and lowered and got them those life jackets, the whistle life
8 jackets and a hand-held radio I believe.

9 Approximately 2045 or so this guy Jay, which I later learned
10 (indiscernible) Lombardo (PH) his last name, he had the radio. He
11 started -- we got (indiscernible) and you know, obviously he was
12 in distress. Again, the shifting seascape was making it harder
13 and harder for them to continue to hold on. We talked to him.
14 [REDACTED] the perspective CO, the lieutenant of FIC handled the
15 radio calmly. He did a great job talking to Jay, you know, trying
16 to keep him calm, letting him know that we were trying. You know,
17 we're trying to come up with a plan to help them. You know, we
18 were pretty helpless, though, to be honest with you. But you
19 know, just a horrible situation.

20 About 2100, 2130-ish, I'm not sure of the timeframe for sure.
21 Like I say, there's notes that are more precise than mine. The
22 third of the five persons washed into the water. Like I say, I
23 was positioned a little further south away from the
24 (indiscernible) side, but the two RBMs were in good position, but
25 the person just slipped right by. That's how bad it had gotten.

1 They tried (indiscernible) back down. We tried to find him and he
2 just, you know, the Bristow chopper had to go back and refuel. A
3 few minutes later they came back out and they -- soon as they got
4 back they went out with their spotlight trying to find that third
5 person that we knew had washed into the water. Well, Jay had told
6 us and then we could see on the flare that there was only two
7 people left, with the flare -- the infrared camera.

8 So you know, that happens. And I believe the next day they
9 found the person drowned, unfortunately.

10 So by the end, I guess somewhere around 2200, 10:00 that
11 evening, Jay and the other person -- he started talking -- he told
12 us about this hatch because it was getting so difficult for him to
13 hold on that they were going to start (indiscernible) trying to
14 get into this hatch he kept talking about. So they kind of made
15 their way in there. He did come out once or twice in that
16 timeframe, looks like 10 -- between 10 and 10:30-ish -- you know,
17 Jay did and there was body communication still and it was about
18 that same time we were waiting -- [REDACTED] the CO of the boat, the
19 perspective CO was telling them we're waiting on a Coast Guard
20 chopper to come out. Plus they had the Coast Guard airplane. I'm
21 not sure what the acronym is for that plane, but it was flying
22 around discussing maybe dropping a life raft in the water for them
23 (indiscernible). You know, every time they would assess the
24 situation they would realize that the condition was just too, too
25 dangerous, too unsafe to try and do anything really for them

1 unfortunately.

2 One of the RBMs (indiscernible) after they searched for the
3 person in the water. The other one that had retrieved the person
4 ran him into Fourchon and came back out, but his time, I remember,
5 was getting limited. They had to (indiscernible) had made his way
6 close to me. He was right behind me holding position
7 (indiscernible) was on scene. So about that time I started
8 talking to the CO, [REDACTED] about going -- you know, because we
9 were not set up with, you know, watch duty. You know, we was only
10 supposed to be going to an 8-hour run. By this time it was going
11 -- we'd been out there a while with these heavy conditions. I was
12 starting to get worried about us, fatigue wise. So letting [REDACTED]
13 know, the inspector know, that we weren't going to be able to stay
14 out there all night long. And that I wanted to run in after the
15 Coast Guard chopper got on scene. So he got on the telephone,
16 told him what I wanted to do, and again, we stopped hearing from
17 Jay. It had been a while, over a half hour that we had heard from
18 him. So you know, there was nothing more we could have done out
19 there. Plus we had (indiscernible) down there. Been like three-
20 and-a-half, four hours (indiscernible) that he was on the ship. I
21 kind of wanted to get him to the dock also, too, like all the
22 other Good Samaritan boats had done by then.

23 About 2315 the Coast Guard chopper arrived. He started doing
24 the situation assessment like they do. About 2330 or so Coast
25 Guard chopper came over the radio and said he agreed with the

1 Bristow chopper assessment of the situation with not being able to
2 attempt a rescue or lower anyone down in that situation. So I
3 made the call to go ahead and start making our way back into Port
4 Fourchon.

5 Like I say, the Coast Guard chopper was on scene and a Stem
6 Star 4 (PH) was right behind me to kind of ease up and kind of
7 take my place with a spotlight to keep light on the piece of the
8 cabin that was sticking up out of the water.

9 So I made my way in. I arrived, it was about -- just after
10 midnight about 0015 I arrived back at our (indiscernible)
11 location. The wind was still blowing 35 knots. It was still
12 surprising to me how bad current (indiscernible) was unbelievable
13 because of the wind driven current inbound, flood tide was pouring
14 into the pass and to the port. It was crazy weather situation
15 that night.

16 But we moored safely and immediately we had all the first
17 responders there to pick up Zachary and take him away. And that's
18 pretty much it.

19 Q. Captain, I really appreciate the detail there. That was a
20 huge help, thank you. Because of that, though, I have quite a few
21 follow-up questions, I hope you don't mind. The sea trail -- or
22 the training that you were going to do, was that -- did you
23 intentionally -- was this heavy weather training on purpose? In
24 other words, did you get under way --

25 A. No. Oh no, not at all. No, we decided to go regardless of

1 this weather that was coming anticipating (indiscernible) calm as
2 weather as possible. Especially, this training is not operational
3 training. It's training -- getting -- it's familiarization
4 training to teach the Coast Guard crews the equipment on the FRCs
5 mainly. It's not operational training at all. It's just to
6 familiarize them with the cutters that we provide them. They do
7 operational training after delivery and get qualified for
8 operations well after delivery of the cutter.

9 Q. Okay. What was your -- how many people did you have on board
10 that day?

11 A. We were approximately 35 of us (indiscernible) -- my sea
12 trial crew is -- the basic crew, the shipyard were five of us.
13 It's myself, we have a leaderman, a (indiscernible), an outside
14 machinist and an electrician, which are very experienced boat
15 people. And then we also had those three instructors from our
16 training division (indiscernible) on board with us. So we went
17 eight of us and then the crew of the vessel, which I believe is
18 27, so that would have made 35 total.

19 MR. MUISE: Okay. I'm going to stop there and hand it over
20 to Mike Richards and Melissa Huffman. Just -- if you could just
21 limit the questions to the pre-incident weather information.
22 Mike, go ahead.

23 MR. RICHARDS: Sure, Marcel, thank you.

24 BY MR. RICHARDS:

25 Q. Hello, Captain, Mike Richards, NTSB. Couple questions. I

1 just want to step through the weather information that you were
2 privy to prior to your departure and then while underway prior to
3 the accident time. So with regard to before you departed, what
4 forecast were you looking at? And what I mean is where did you
5 receive that? Was that a government forecast; do you have a prior
6 vendor that provides you that information?

7 A. Yeah. Well, I typically will watch the news every morning,
8 you know, before I get up I'm always watching the weather on the
9 local news out of New Orleans for that local weather. But I
10 typically -- I use this app called Windfinder App, which has a
11 good -- shows the details, like they have a Port Fourchon section;
12 the (indiscernible) Offshore Oil Port has a place on there.
13 Typically I use the Windfinder app to get my forecast from.

14 Q. Okay. And that's what you looked at that morning?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Thank you, sir. And I believe you said you were expecting
17 winds of 35 knots or greater. Can you repeat what you were
18 expecting that morning before you were expecting that morning
19 before you departed?

20 A. I was expecting about 35-knot winds as the line of
21 thunderstorms passed. But I was also expecting it to diminish
22 back down to 15 knots. I believe the seas forecast didn't have it
23 getting over 3 to 5 foot at any point that evening.

24 Q. Okay. And just to be clear, did the Windfinder app tell you
25 about the thunderstorms or were you aware that there were going to

1 be thunderstorms from another source?

2 A. I was tracking the line of storms actually using the Weather
3 Channel app with their radar feature.

4 Q. I see, okay. Thank you. So as far as once you got underway
5 -- well, let me ask you this -- on the bridge of that vessel --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- are there systems that will provide you with weather
8 information while you're under way? Now what I mean by provide
9 is, you could either use that system to get information or it will
10 automatically alert you or print out. What systems do you have
11 onboard that vessel for that?

12 A. We (indiscernible) Navtex receiver that does weather related
13 information (indiscernible) mariners. Honestly I'm not sure if we
14 -- we probably had it turned on, yeah. Through training we
15 definitely would have had it turned on.

16 Q. Okay. And along with the Navtex receiver did you also have a
17 Inmarsat -- it's Inmarsat-C SafetyNET?

18 A. Yeah, we do have Inmarsat. It's GMDSS radios.

19 Q. Okay.

20 (Crosstalk)

21 Q. Sorry, I cut you off, sir.

22 A. That's okay.

23 Q. So that morning -- or that afternoon, excuse me -- while you
24 were underway, prior to the accident time do you recall either the
25 Navtex receiver or the Inmarsat-C SafetyNET receiver going off?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. (Indiscernible) any calls on channel 16 of any weather
4 advisories prior to the line of storms passing.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Not that I recall.

7 Q. Just one more question and then I'll pass it to Ms. Huffman
8 at the Weather Service. You mentioned turning off the Navtex
9 receiver. You believe you had it on that day -- you would have
10 had it on because of the training. Is it common to turn off the
11 Navtex receiver while underway?

12 A. No, we typically have it on. Again, we sea trial; we're
13 always testing. We're always testing all of this equipment so
14 they're typically always on. I honestly I don't really use it
15 that much. You know, like I say, with in this modern day Navtex
16 is kind of an older type of equipment as part of the GMDSS outfit
17 (indiscernible) GMDSS kind so it's not where I drive the ship
18 from. It's back there. You know, I do look at it sometimes, but
19 yeah, it's typically on when we're on training and sea trial runs.
20 But sometimes I turn it off when I'm just running here in the
21 bayou or certain situations. I don't always have it on.

22 Q. Okay. And so I'm going to ask a stupid question because I'm
23 not -- I'm going to admit something to you -- I'm not a mariner so
24 I'm learning quite a bit. But what would be the reason -- I'm
25 thinking perhaps Navtex would be a nuisance if it's always making

1 noises, but I don't know so let me just ask. What would be the
2 reason that someone or you, I guess in this case, would want to
3 turn off the Navtex receiver for certain voyages?

4 A. Not -- no particular reason. I felt (indiscernible) really
5 felt that necessary to safely navigate the ship. I got all these
6 other resources that I get all my information from. And like I
7 say, it's usually on, however.

8 Q. Okay. And there was one question I did forget to ask. So
9 after you departed and were underway that afternoon, did you
10 receive any updated weather information after your departure,
11 before the accident time, or was what you left the port with all
12 you had?

13 A. Well, like I say, we were glancing at the line on our phones.
14 Not only me; I'm sure the crewmembers on board. We were watching
15 that line of storms pretty intently knowing that it was coming and
16 it was going to be -- you know, it looked pretty intense. You
17 know, we knew that line of storms was coming, which is why we
18 talked about it and why we -- you know, we decided that we had
19 enough time because we were monitoring it so closely we knew about
20 when it was going to get there. And we knew (indiscernible) set
21 ourself up on location in a safe spot to be able to ride it out.
22 Again, we're an FRC, very stable -- best Coast Guard cutter ever
23 built, built to handle this kind of stuff with the fancy
24 electronics and radar systems. So we knew we would be okay going
25 out there, holding position, riding out the line of storms and

1 then continue on with training after it would have passed.

2 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Sir, thank you very much for your time.
3 This is really helpful to me. I guess Marcel will ask if
4 Ms. Huffman has any questions at this point.

5 MS. HUFFMAN: I just have a few follow-up questions.

6 BY MS. HUFFMAN:

7 Q. Captain Guidry, did you receive any warnings at all between
8 1430 and 1600?

9 A. No, I do not remember receiving any weather alerts other than
10 possibly on the Weather Channel app, maybe like the severe
11 thunderstorm warning, which is kind of typical. You know, it pops
12 up with the line of storms are coming. But I do not recall --
13 usually when they issue a small craft advisory and as such you
14 hear that on channel 16. And I do not recall hearing
15 (indiscernible) I don't recall hearing any being put out prior to
16 the storm arriving.

17 Q. Okay, thank you. And then have you ever seen within the
18 Weather Channel app the special marine warning?

19 A. You cut out a bit on that one. What's that?

20 Q. Apologies for that. Within the Weather Channel app, or
21 whatever app that you typically use to get weather information,
22 have you ever seen the special marine warning go out through that
23 app?

24 A. Not on the Weather Channel typically. It's not a marine app.
25 No, and the Windfinder does not give warnings like that. It's

1 just a forecast of sea conditions and wind -- wind and sea
2 conditions and moon cycles. It's just a good handy app for a
3 mariner to use to get that as far as weather goes. I've been
4 using it for years. It's usually very accurate. I deliver
5 (indiscernible) to Key West and I use it to check what the
6 forecasts are to employ (indiscernible) out in the middle of the
7 Gulf. I'm sure they're getting their data from NOAA because it's
8 a NOAA weather buoy that they give the forecasts and the
9 conditions from. And then also (indiscernible) Key West side
10 prior to departure each delivery trip and it's always right on
11 point. It's usually always fairly accurate as to what I end up
12 dealing with.

13 Q. Okay, thank you. And then just one final question. How do
14 you normally receive special marine warnings or any kind of marine
15 warning?

16 A. Well, those -- typically on channel 16 on VHF. They
17 typically come over on channel 16 on VHF.

18 Q. Okay, thank you.

19 A. All right.

20 MR. MUISE: Thank you, Melissa.

21 BY MR. MUISE:

22 Q. Captain, I'd like to talk a little bit about equipment now.
23 I heard you say that this isn't a fully equipped Coast Guard
24 cutter and I understand this is probably something I should have
25 asked Lieutenant [REDACTED], but what -- do you know what equipment

1 is not on board that should be there for a commissioned cutter for
2 lifesaving? And if you don't know --

3 A. Yeah, well -- right. I'm sure there's a lot of things that I
4 don't even know about that they have. We do carry our basic -- we
5 do have (indiscernible) basket. We obviously carry all our life
6 rings, our lifejackets as required for a vessel of that type to
7 carry. We do have all that. We have all our lifejackets, life
8 rings. A Jacob's ladder we carry. A hook pole. All those types
9 of equipment we do carry, okay. Now, I know the Coast Guard have,
10 like, what they call -- you know, like their suits, immersion
11 suits and the such to put on for hypothermia and such like that.
12 We're not required to carry that. They carry a lot more SCBA
13 firefighting equipment than we do. Again, we have two sets of
14 SBCAs that we carry onboard and our guys are trained for
15 firefighting. But it's more, like, along the lines of basic
16 commercial type vessel of that type we keep outfitted, but we
17 don't have the numbers like they have as far as immersion suits
18 and things like that, you know. DC gear, they carry a lot more
19 damage control gear than we do. Again, that's just for them to
20 use if they were to go to help people and such, I guess.

21 (Indiscernible) pumps we do carry them. We do have P100 pumps, P5
22 pump onboard the ship. Again, we do have that onboard, but like I
23 say all this outfit equipment that they receive, you know
24 knickknack (verbatim) stuff, I couldn't tell you exactly what all
25 they carry that we don't.

1 Q. (Indiscernible) Captain, a man overboard buoy or data marker
2 buoy? It's a buoy that you'd launch in a man overboard and it's
3 supposed to drift at the same rate as a person. Was one of those
4 onboard?

5 A. We don't have one. We have lift rafts, but we don't any of
6 those -- we don't have those types of buoys onboard.

7 Q. Okay. How about line throwing gun or line throwing
8 apparatus?

9 A. What's that?

10 Q. A line throwing apparatus or line throwing gun?

11 A. Oh no, no, we do not have a line throwing gun.

12 Q. Okay. Are you familiar with search and rescue transponders?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. At any time during the incident or during the response, did
15 you see one of those on your radar?

16 A. No. (Indiscernible) I bet you that thing went quick given
17 that wind situation. If it did deploy -- if they managed to get
18 it out (indiscernible) probably would have quickly made its way
19 away before I even arrived on scene the way the wind was blowing.

20 Q. Okay. The five people that were there when you arrived. So
21 the first one is Zach that you mentioned. How did you get him on
22 board?

23 A. Well, we saw him get into the water and maneuvered the ship
24 as best I could to kind of give him a little bit of a lead side
25 and we -- the crewmembers lined the side of the ship and as I got

1 close enough they threw life rings at him. He was not wearing a
2 lifejacket. They threw life rings at him. He was able to grab
3 one and they were able to help pull him closer to where the
4 Jacob's ladder was deployed at the bow of -- right forward bow
5 opening about mid ship. Again, right below where I was standing
6 with the portable controller and they reached down and helped grab
7 them and pulled them right up on the ship.

8 Q. Okay. And the second person -- I think I know who that is
9 that the RBM picked up. The third person that got swept away, do
10 you know who that was?

11 A. No.

12 Q. How about the fifth person that was with Jay; do you know who
13 that was?

14 A. No.

15 Q. The space that they crawled into, I think I know where they
16 were, but did they describe it at all? Like, was there water in
17 there or was there somewhere that they felt safe in?

18 A. Honestly, no. I wasn't -- like I said, it was busy. It was
19 so rough and I was handling the ship. I was glancing over at the
20 infrared camera every once in a while and I really never really
21 saw that night -- now, I have since then from the helicopter
22 photos that I've seen on the news, a hatch that I think they may
23 have gone into. It seemed like a square opening, which was kind
24 of on the side of the cabin right there and I'm thinking it may
25 have been that, but I honestly don't know what they were talking

1 about exactly where they crawled into. I could not see them from
2 handling the ship the way I was. We were a couple hundred yards
3 from them anyway.

4 Q. Right. I've got a few questions about your time at Aries, if
5 you don't mind, because you're the first lift boat captain that
6 we've talked to, other than Seacor. Which Aries boats were you
7 on?

8 A. What's that?

9 Q. Which lift boats at Aries?

10 A. Oh, God, that's a long time ago. So I was the captain on the
11 Ram 3 (PH) but you know, I had never ran lift barges before I went
12 there. My little story about lift barges is I used to run supply
13 boats and we would supply those things all the time and every once
14 in a while I'd have to go up on them to fax off my grocery orders
15 and lists and things and every time I'd go up there I was always
16 intrigued by the way these guys have such a good life, you know.
17 They were up there with Direct TV and cooks. So finally I
18 decided, you know, I need to make a career change and go work on
19 one of these things. So I went out, Aries Marine hired me. Of
20 course it's a different type of vessel so even though I was
21 already a captain they put me on as a mate. I worked on the Ram
22 6. I only worked on it for about a year. I worked on the Ram 6
23 as a mate for about six months working a 14 on/14 off schedule.
24 And then -- they were building new boats at the time so as another
25 new boat came out, the crew on the Ram 3 took a new boat and they

1 made me captain on the Ram 3, this other barge -- I think it was
2 175-foot legs on the Ram 3.

3 Q. I heard you mentioned that you were jacked up for several
4 days waiting on weather -- and understanding that every client is
5 different and every contract is different --

6 A. Right.

7 Q. -- if you do that are you on down time?

8 A. What do you mean, like --

9 Q. Like if you're waiting on weather are you off contract or are
10 you taking a hit on your --

11 A. No, not really. You know, that's lift barge business 101.
12 you know, it's -- I could tell you that when they made me captain
13 on the Ram 3 at Aries Marine, they took me in the operations
14 managers office and Dave Well (PH) told me that they had my back
15 no matter what I decided they would always have my back,
16 especially when it came to weather related issues and I always
17 felt comfortable not worrying about making a call to not run or go
18 ahead and jack down and lift up out the water, wait out weather if
19 need be. I didn't really concern myself about it. I been in a
20 situation -- the story I tell people is I loaded out in Cameron
21 one time for Texaco. A company man was on board and I told him a
22 cold front was coming and I wasn't going to make it out to the
23 location and, you know, they love to load the barges up at the
24 dock with personnel and equipment so the don't have to hire crew
25 boats and the such or whatever. So he said oh we gotta go anyway.

1 So I got underway, cleared the channel and jacked down before the
2 cold front hit and I sat there for like three days and the company
3 man was literally coming to me with tears in his eyes by the end
4 of the third day because it still was too rough to get underway.
5 But you know, it can get calm enough, you jack down and you
6 continue on. It's just lift barge business. You know, I'm not
7 sure about contracts and how payments go. It's just what you do
8 when you're a captain on a lift barge. You just do what's safe
9 first because everybody knows that it's a dangerous vessel to
10 operate.

11 MR. MUISE: Okay. Again, Captain, thank you for all the
12 detailed information. I'm going to hand it over to my colleague,
13 Andrew, now.

14 BY MR. EHLERS:

15 Q. And good morning, again, Captain. I just have a real short
16 set of questions. First of all, you described (indiscernible)
17 your crew, which is really helpful. Of your crew, how many have
18 Coast Guard licenses?

19 A. (Indiscernible) Bollinger crew?

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. Yeah, contractually -- again, this is a government boat here.
22 Contractually it calls for only a licensed captain 500 tons or
23 greater, which I have a 3,000-ton international license. My crew,
24 the rest of the guys, are qualified but not certified. They do
25 not have licenses (indiscernible) sea trial crews.

1 Q. Okay. What kind of training do they get in search and rescue
2 equipment, that kind of stuff?

3 A. My crew, we do drills regularly. I try every -- you know,
4 between sea trial runs we do get a couple of runs in between. We
5 do the ABS, ABCU run, which is a 12-hour run. I like to kind of
6 perform underway drills on that day so we're not so heavily
7 involved with testing. Also, every time I leave with a new boat,
8 do trainings as we're being tugged down to that area where it's
9 safe for me to get underway, we always review the station bill and
10 go over all the duties that each of us have in the event of an
11 emergency. Again, we're not training to do any search and rescue;
12 we're training to -- well, except if it's our own man overboard
13 drills, firefighting drills, abandon ship. Those are the types of
14 trainings that we do. Plus, we periodically send sea trial crew
15 members threw firefighting training and then we outfit them with
16 their won SCBA outfit.

17 Q. Okay, that's helpful. And do they ever go through, like, BST
18 training, basic training (indiscernible) firefighting?

19 A. Yeah, we use the LSU firefighting school. It does
20 (indiscernible) I'm not sure if they're (indiscernible) certified,
21 but it does go along the same line, marine vessel firefighting
22 training.

23 Q. Okay, all right. On the two training trips that you had
24 taken, did that include any type of search and rescue maneuvering
25 or anything like that?

1 A. Well, the first day is small boat training mostly where we
2 just -- the day before we had got underway. The first underway
3 day -- again, it's mostly equipment (indiscernible) and then we do
4 small boat training, which is just launch and recovery. Very slow
5 controlled waves, the young crewmembers just trying to get
6 qualified. But it's just launch and recovery, coming in
7 alongside. And then we do a little performance demonstration,
8 emergency stop with the FRC, anchoring evolution.

9 Q. Okay, all right. So when you launched the boat on the
10 accident day, was that just your crew; no Coast Guard members?

11 A. Yes, it was just our crew. None of the precommissioning was
12 on board the small boat.

13 Q. Okay. And how many crewmembers did you have onboard there?
14 I know you mentioned the coxswain was a really skilled coxswain.
15 Who else did you have onboard?

16 A. We had -- I had another sea trial crewmembers who's another
17 experienced guy. Actually the other one was a very experienced
18 guy, been with us since the beginning. And then one of the Chand
19 instructors, there were three of them in the small boat.

20 Q. Okay, all right. And then only other question I have for you
21 -- you mentioned that -- I think when the rains hit you had 80-
22 mile-per-hour winds. How long did that 80-mile-per-hour winds
23 last; do you have a good estimate?

24 A. I would say a good 15, 20 minutes. It was pretty sustained.
25 Maybe up to a half hour. Kind of hard to say because, you know.

1 A good 15, 20 minutes it held up really strong like that. Way too
2 long for my blood. It was kind of surprising, but like I say, we
3 just held position and monitored the radar and radios and the AIS
4 on the navigation on the charting system. There was a few boats
5 in the areas keeping a close eye on them making sure they didn't
6 get to close to us.

7 Q. Okay. And then after that 80-mile-per-hour, that's when it
8 subsided to 30- to 40-mile-per-hour? And then --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- sustained?

11 A. (Indiscernible) pretty quickly came down to that 35-, 40-knot
12 winds and it just sustained that all night.

13 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. Thank you, very much,
14 Captain.

15 MR. MUISE: Sorry about that. Captain Phillips, would you
16 like to get started for the Coast Guard?

17 LT. [REDACTED] Marcel, this is Lieutenant [REDACTED] I believe
18 Captain Phillips had a department call, unless she chimes in, at
19 around 10. So we'll be -- I had a couple questions.

20 MR. MUISE: Go ahead, [REDACTED] thank you.

21 BY LT. [REDACTED]

22 Q. This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] (Indiscernible).

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. Just had a couple questions. We've kind of went through a
25 lot of it. Did you -- you know, the way you guys said you were

1 having conversations about the vessel and kind of talking about
2 the makeup of the vessel when it was leaving port. Did you
3 observe anything abnormal about vessel or anything that seemed odd
4 to you about its makeup or, you know, how -- the deck, anything
5 abnormal that you noticed?

6 A. Right, that's the best question so far. I thought someone
7 was going to ask me that. No, I did not notice anything unusual.
8 It looked good. You know, I didn't really -- I wasn't really
9 paying much attention to that, but I think back on it and
10 obviously I was thinking of that and from what I remember -- and I
11 did look at it a lot heading and it looked good. It looked not
12 overloaded. I didn't see anything unusual about its, you know,
13 floating condition at all.

14 Q. It may not have been something you picked up on. Did you
15 happen to notice the state of any of the doors opened or closed,
16 watertight doors, things like that?

17 A. No. No, I can't say that I did.

18 Q. Okay. And I was just curious, so when you were on scene and
19 you guys were kind of assessing the situation, you know, sizing up
20 whether you guys could, you know, attempt any rescue, what was the
21 closest that you were really able to get to the vessel safely?

22 A. That's a tough one. You know, at one point probably in the
23 beginning I probably got within about 100 -- I'd hate to say 100
24 yards because that's probably really close. About 150 yards,
25 couple 100 yards. I can tell you that the more I saw all the

1 stuff -- and I did notice one of the crane booms a little later
2 that I didn't notice at first, was sticking out. I think one of
3 the cranes kind of slid down the leg and the boom was still
4 extended out, like towards the south a bit. And that kind of
5 surprised me because I realized that I had got dangerously close
6 to that crane boom when I first arrived. I didn't realize that it
7 had -- sticking out that far away from it. So I'd say a couple
8 100 yards or so; it's hard to tell.

9 Q. I appreciate it. That's the only questions I had sticking
10 out in my head. So thank you.

11 A. All right.

12 MR. MUISE: [REDACTED] please.

13 BY MR. [REDACTED]

14 Q. Yeah, Captain Guidry, the crane boom, can you elaborate on
15 that again a little bit more. You said it was sticking out
16 further towards the south. Like, it had came out its cradle or
17 anything?

18 A. Like it slid down the leg. It seemed like it was maybe --
19 it's hard to tell because all I saw was the wash of the top of the
20 base of the crane and then I noticed -- when I noticed that, I
21 looked out and I did notice the waves crashing around the boom,
22 which was further out -- kind of, I believe it was like south --
23 like, that would have been its port leg crane probably. It was
24 out there (indiscernible) away from the barge it seemed like. I
25 was surprised for that.

1 Q. Oh, okay. Yeah, I got you. I think that's it. I mean, you
2 did a good job of explaining everything in detail. As I was
3 taking notes to ask questions you kind of went back and covered
4 them so it was a great story.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. Great recollection.

7 A. Hopefully I can help out.

8 MR. MUISE: Captain, in the interest of transparency, one of
9 my NTSB colleagues, Mike Kucharski, has joined us. Mike, do you
10 have any follow-up questions for us.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: No, thank you. No follow up.

12 MR. MUISE: Okay, thanks. ABS, please?

13 MR. PRESTON: John Preston with ABS.

14 BY MR. PRESTON:

15 Q. Thank you, Captain, for explaining all this to us. Does the
16 US -- does the Coast Guard cutter that you were piloting, does it
17 have any cameras or recording devices in it?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. It does? So were they on anytime during that day, do you
20 know, recording any of this?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay.

23 MR. MUISE: John, this is Marcel at NTSB. We have all that
24 recording. We're just having some technical challenges accessing
25 it, but we'll get that to everybody.

1 MR. PRESTON: Okay, thank you.

2 BY MR. PRESTON:

3 Q. The other question I was going to ask is can you please
4 describe, I guess, the condition of the *Seacor Power* when you got
5 there? I understood that part of the accommodations was out of
6 the water. Could you see, like, one deck or two decks or could
7 you see all three decks?

8 A. Yeah, the piece that was sticking out was the very, I guess
9 -- you know, it was on -- it was laying on its -- well, the port
10 side was what was sticking up out the water. And the piece that
11 was -- the piece of cabin was the port side forward part, the main
12 deck, the lower main deck cabin. That's all that was sticking up,
13 a little piece of it still right there.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. They have a stack, which was a little above it kind of that
16 is three smoke stacks that exhaust that stick out right above that
17 section, which would be more, like, right off -- overboard on the
18 port side right there.

19 Q. Okay, excellent, understood. And then one clarification,
20 when you were discussing the wind earlier, I heard two different
21 units. Which unit is the wind gauge, the anemometer, on the
22 cutters?

23 A. What's the question?

24 Q. The anemometer on the cutters, is it knots or miles an hour?

25 A. It was in knots.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Definitely knots, yes.

3 Q. Okay. So I understand all the discussion about 80 was 80
4 knots?

5 A. 80 knots, yes. I saw, I saw 80. I personally looked at the
6 gauge while I was handling the ship or watching -- actually,
7 (indiscernible) when the 80 knot winds was coming I had the crew
8 holding the ship. They did a great job. I was just kind of
9 watching them hold the ship, the helm person was holding the ship,
10 bow into the seas, into the wind. And just kind of waiting it
11 out, you know, monitoring all the equipment and it was steady 80-
12 knot winds.

13 MR. PRESTON: Okay. That's all I have. Thank you, very
14 much, sir.

15 MR. MUISE: Seacor, please.

16 MR. CENAC: Good morning, (indiscernible) Michael Cenac,
17 Seacor Marine. Thank you and your crew for all your service. I
18 don't have any further questions.

19 MR. MUISE: Okay. Thank you, Michael.

20 Mike Richards, we talked about preincident weather earlier.
21 Would you like to continue with your line of questioning?

22 MR. RICHARDS: I do have one follow-up question regarding
23 weather information. Actually, Mike Richards, NTSB.

24 BY MR. RICHARDS:

25 Q. Following up on something that hasn't been asked. And again,

1 I'm not a mariner so these may seem kind of silly, but I just want
2 to understand.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. So channel 16, I presume -- the only way that this would work
5 for someone to get weather information from channel 16 is if
6 you've tuned your radio to channel 16 and have it turned on; is
7 that correct?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Okay. So when you get a weather alert or weather -- type of
10 weather information -- and again, I presume that if it comes over
11 channel 16 it's going to be important.

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. Okay. What does that sound like? Is that provided by a
14 human voice; is that an automated robot type of voice; what does
15 it sound like; how does it come across?

16 A. No, it's a human voice. It's a Coast Guard person at the
17 sector giving Pom-Pom, Pom-Pom call out and, you know, they say
18 marine -- you know when it's coming. They -- it's -- channel 16
19 is a distress and emergency channel only, trust me. They're
20 constantly reminding us of that when we try and talk a little bit
21 on channel 16. So -- and but you're required to monitor it so
22 every boat should have their channel 16 up and monitoring it
23 underway. And they have an array of antennas, even though VHF is
24 line of sight, they have an array of antennas spread out along the
25 coast line. So it disseminates out into the gulf probably, you

1 know, with antennas 30, 30 miles or so from the coastline. And
2 you hear them when they have these messages or they'll pass along
3 even, you know, minor distress messages or EPIRB signals that
4 they're receiving. You know, that's what channel 16 is all about.

5 Q. Okay. Are these alerts preceded by an audible tone, an alert
6 tone?

7 A. No, it's not like that, no.

8 Q. Okay. And just to confirm, I believe you said that prior to
9 the accident time you did not hear a weather alert come across on
10 channel 16; is that correct?

11 A. No, not that I can recall.

12 Q. Okay. But I believe you said that you did hear something
13 later in the afternoon, following the accident time; is that
14 correct?

15 A. Actually, I'm sure -- you know, channel 16, I'm sure -- what
16 they were doing is disseminating other -- because that wasn't the
17 only incident that day. That wasn't the only boat that got in
18 trouble. There was other boats -- in fact, some small boats
19 capsized. They had a lot of little things going on, obviously,
20 with that weather event and they were, you know, disseminating
21 that information over channel 16 so other mariners can know about
22 it. But we were -- [REDACTED] the prospective CO aboard with me, he
23 was on 16 relaying information to sector and the other Good
24 Samaritan ships were all talking to each other on 16 also that
25 day. So we kept it pretty, pretty used up.

1 Q. Okay. Okay. So how does channel 22 work with weather
2 information? I believe someone said something about channel 22.
3 Is that, is that also a source, as well?

4 A. Yes, that -- channel -- now that's not something you monitor.
5 That's a channel that the Coast Guard has, 21, 22, 81, 82, 83
6 alpha, all those channels. Those are other Coast Guard channels
7 that you switch to they'll ask you -- when they do their
8 dissemination sometimes they'll tell you that they'll disseminate,
9 like, informational type messages on channel 21 or 22 alpha to
10 switch to it. And then they'll just do it on those channels
11 instead of doing it on channel 16.

12 Q. Okay. That's -- this is helpful. Okay. Just one more
13 question, and this is, I guess, your opinion; I'm just trying to
14 get some context here as to how maybe 16 gets used. So with the
15 weather that you encountered, 80-knot winds, would that be a
16 condition that you would have expected to hear some type of alert
17 come across on channel 16?

18 A. Yes, definitely.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. (Indiscernible) forecast, some kind of anomaly happened that
21 night.

22 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. This is very helpful for me. Thank you
23 very much for your time. Marcel, I don't have any other
24 questions. I'm not sure if Melissa has a follow-up, though.

25 MR. MUISE: Melissa, go ahead.

1 MS. HUFFMAN: No follow-up questions, thank you.

2 MR. MUISE: Okay. Captain, I just had one more follow up,
3 but I'll save that for last. Does anybody else have any other
4 follow-up questions? [REDACTED] I see, go ahead.

5 BY MR. [REDACTED]

6 Q. Hey Captain Leonard (verbatim), this is [REDACTED] with the Coast
7 Guard. You talked about the Navtex. You're familiar with the
8 Navtex receiver and where that information gets broadcast from?

9 A. Yes.

10 (Crosstalk)

11 A. Right here in New Orleans, (indiscernible) I believe
12 disseminates Navtex. It's not every -- you don't get Navtex
13 everywhere. You'll have, you know, towers spread out along the
14 coastline and if you leave it on and if you're within a
15 dissemination location you receive the messages.

16 Q. Okay. Do you know how many miles the broadcast from the
17 station out of New Orleans goes out?

18 A. We catch it here. I know it's (indiscernible) like 500
19 kilohertz, 500-some kilohertz. It's not a very strong signal.
20 It's, like, almost -- so it goes out maybe up to 150, 100 miles or
21 so, I believe. (Indiscernible) the situations I guess.

22 Q. Right, okay. That's what I just wanted to check. Thank you,
23 Captain.

24 A. Yeah.

25 MR. MUISE: Is there any -- sorry about that. Is there any

1 other follow ups? Okay. Seeing none, so Captain Guidry, I very
2 much appreciate all the detailed information today. It was
3 helpful for all of us, I think, to get your perspective. And
4 please pass on our sincere thanks to your Bollinger crew there.
5 What you guys did that day was awesome, thank you. My last
6 question is, is there anything that I didn't ask that we should
7 know about or that you think would be helpful for us investigating
8 this accident?

9 CAPT. GUIDRY: No, I believe we pretty much covered it. I
10 can't think of anything.

11 MR. MUISE: Okay. If you do think of anything else you can
12 reach me -- actually, you have Andrew's email or we're at
13 witness@NTSB.gov. And with that it's 11:26 on the East Coast.
14 I'll secure the recorder.

15 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CAPSIZING OF LIFT BOAT *SEACOR*
 POWER SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON,
 LOUISIANA ON APRIL 13, 2021
 Interview of Leonard Guidry

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21FM024

PLACE: Via telephone

DATE: May 4, 2021

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Christy Behlke
Transcriber

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

CAPSIZING OF LIFT BOAT *

SEACOR POWER SOUTH OF * Accident No.: DCA21MM024

PORT FOURCHON, LOUISIANA, *

ON APRIL 13, 2021 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: LEONARD GUIDRY, Sea Trail Captain
Bollinger Shipyard

Via telephone

Tuesday,
May 4, 2021



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Transcript Errata

TABLE OF CORRECTIONS FOR TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW WITH: CAPTAIN LEONARD GUIDRY RECORDED ON MAY 4, 2021

PAGE NUMBER	LINE NUMBER	CURRENT WORDING	CORRECTED WORDING
Cover Page	N/A	Trail	Trial
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5	16	Vattaglia	Battaglia
6	7	Eddison Schwintz	Edison Chouest
6	14	far sea	FRC
6	25	dalmon	Damen
7	2	dalmon	Damen
8	20	platform	platforms
9	6	slide-offs	light-offs
9	7	la Fourche	Lafourche
9	13	how it worked...	how I worked...
9	16	It's	I
10	1	Vale	Belle
10	21	Ellis	Elmer's
12	1	Mollen	Matta
12	4	the phone, my supervisor	the phone with my supervisor I
12	14	looked	look
13	6	handled	to handle
14	8	lead	leeside
14	12	CHAN	Chand
14	22	lost	launched
15	1	Fecedo	Reynolds
15	7	what	that
15	13	appended	pendant
15	15	way	wing
15	19	appended	pendant
15	20	release	lee (leeside)
16	11	heliport	helipad
16	12	heli	lee (leeside)
16	14	heliport	helipad
16	15	half legs	back leg
16	19	(indiscernible)	second
18	10	(indiscernible) Lombardo	Jay Guevara
18	12	seascape	sea state



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Transcript Errata

18	14	FIC	FRC
18	24	(indiscernible)	lee
19	1	They tried (indiscernible) back down.	I tried to back down.
19	7	flare	FLIR
19	17	body	spotty
20	5	to (indiscernible)	the Stim Star IV
20	7	(indiscernible)	Stim Star IV
20	13	inspector	sector
20	19	(indiscernible)	Zachary Louviere
21	5	Stem	Stim
21	10	(indiscernible)	mooring
21	21	trail	trial
22	13	(indiscernible)	pipe fitter
22	16	(indiscernible)	Chand
23	12	(indiscernible)	Louisiana
28	5	(indiscernible)	FRCs
28	6	employ (indiscernible)	voyage plan
28	9	(indiscernible)	on the
29	5	(indiscernible)	a Stokes litter
29	14	SBCAs	SCBAs
30	5	lift	life
30	24	lead	lee
31	7	them and pulled them	him and pulled him
33	14	Dave	they
35	16	won	own

If, to the best of your knowledge, no corrections are needed kindly circle the statement "no corrections needed" and initial in the space provided.

NO CORRECTIONS NEEDED.

Initials

Rachael Battaglia

Printed Name of Person providing the above information

Signature of Person providing the above information

06/01/2021

Date

APPEARANCES:

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ANDREW EHLERS, Investigator in Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

MIKE RICHARDS, Meteorologist
National Transportation Safety Board

MIKE KUCHARSKI, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

[REDACTED], Recorder
US Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

TRACY PHILLIPS, Chair
US Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

[REDACTED], Member
US Coast Guard Marine Board of Investigation

JOHN PRESTON, Chief Surveyor Offshore
American Bureau of Shipping

MELISSA HUFFMAN, Warning Coordination Meteorologist
National Weather Service

MICHAEL CENAC, Chief Security Officer
Seacor Power

RACHEL VATTAGLIA
Seacor Power

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I N T E R V I E W

(10:00 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. MUISE: Good morning, this is Marcel Muise with the
4 National Transportation Safety Board. It's 10 a.m. on May the
5 4th, 10 a.m. Eastern time. We are interviewing Captain Guidry
6 with Bollinger Shipyard as part of the investigation into the loss
7 of the *Seacor Power* from April 13th.

8 Mr. Guidry, will you just introduce yourself for us and spell
9 your name?

10 MR. GUIDRY: Yeah, my name is Leonard Guidry; I am the sea
11 trial captain at Bollinger Shipyard.

12 MR. MUISE: And who else is on the line from NTSB? I have
13 everybody's spelling of their names now, so I don't think I need
14 that, just who's on the line? Andrew, first?

15 MR. EHLERS: Good morning, Captain. This is Drew Ehlers; I'm
16 the investigator in charge of the investigation on behalf of the
17 NTSB, thanks for joining us.

18 MR. RICHARDS: And Mike Richards, NTSB meteorology group
19 chairman.

20 MR. MUISE: And from the Coast Guard, please?

21 MS. PHILLIPS: Good morning. I'm Tracy Phillips, P H I L L I
22 P S, I'm the Coast Guard's Chair of the Marine Board of
23 Investigation.

24 MR. [REDACTED] Good morning, Lieutenant [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Coast Guard Marine Investigator.

1 MR. MUISE: [REDACTED] go ahead, please.

2 MR. [REDACTED] Good morning. Sorry, I hit the wrong button.
3 This is [REDACTED] of the Coast Guard, [REDACTED]. Thank you.

4 MR. MUISE: And Lieutenant [REDACTED], are you on the line? No.
5 That's okay, ABS, please.

6 MR. PRESTON: John Preston with the American Bureau of
7 Shipping, J O H N, P R E S T O N.

8 MR. MUISE: And National Weather Service?

9 MR. HUFFMAN: Good morning, this is Melissa Huffman with the
10 National Weather Service.

11 MR. MUISE: And *Seacor* Marine, please?

12 MR. CENAC: Good morning, this is Michael Cenac with *Seacor*
13 *Marine*.

14 MR. MUISE: And Rachel, I didn't catch your last name. I'm
15 sorry.

16 MS. VATTAGLIA: Hi, it's Rachel Vattaglia, V A T T A G L I A.

17 INTERVIEW OF LEONARD GUIDRY

18 BY MR. MUISE:

19 Q. Okay, thank you for joining us. And Captain, just to
20 get started, can you give us a little about your background? What
21 it is you do for Bollinger and how it is you got to be there?

22 A. Yeah, I started working on boats back in 1985, straight
23 out of high school. Been holding a captain's license since March
24 of 1987. I've worked on tug boats, supply boats over the years, I
25 actually worked on lift barges back in '97, '98 for Aries Marine.

1 Been working for Bollinger -- my daddy was a sea trial captain
2 back in the 80s for the 110s that were built here at Bollinger,
3 and 1993 I began working as a contractor with him helping him out
4 doing sea trials at Bollinger. And in 1998, Bollinger hired me
5 full time as their sea trial captain, and since then I've sea
6 trialed all the vessels that they've built here at Bollinger
7 Shipyards, and then I did a couple of stints with Eddison Schwintz
8 offshore between contracts here, took gaps periodically, so I went
9 -- worked for them since then. So yeah, I've been doing all these
10 Coast Guard cutter and Navy PC sea trials here since 1993.

11 Q. Okay. Is your involvement just with the sea trials, or
12 are you involved with the design and outfitting and construction
13 as well?

14 A. Well, yeah partially, especially the far sea project, I
15 was involved in the beginning of this one. Just minor opinions on
16 layout and the such of console layouts and such, but mostly just
17 sea trialing the boats, running them, preliminary testing here in
18 the shipyard prior to getting underway, and in crew training. We
19 also have a heavy crew training part of these contracts, so
20 obviously I have to learn the equipment on the bridge to operate
21 it correctly, so it lends into training. So I do a lot of the
22 pilot house equipment training with the Coast Guard crews also.

23 Q. The FRC, is that an in-house design for Bollinger? Is
24 that something you bought off the shelf?

25 A. The FRC -- it was a dalmon (PH), it was a -- the

1 contract required a proven design, so it's kind of a -- it's a --
2 the hull is definitely a dalmon hull, but then it's modified to
3 suit the contractual requirements for the U.S. Coast Guard.

4 Q. Captain, what I'd like you to do is just tell us your
5 story about that day on April 13th, from the time you left the
6 dock to the time you got back, in as much detail as you can.
7 We've already talked to Captain [REDACTED], but I'd like to hear
8 your perspective of what happened that day. I'm not going to
9 interrupt you, just -- we're really -- none of us were there, so
10 we're really interested in hearing what you saw and experienced
11 that day.

12 A. Yeah, but before I start, you know Captain [REDACTED] he
13 did a great job, you know, helping out. And as far as you know --
14 I'm going to give you some time as I tell you my story, but I know
15 that especially after we got on site at the *Seacor Power*, he had
16 an operations specialist first class on board, and he tasked him
17 with chronicling the timeline from that point, vessel names and
18 the such. So I'm sure he was able to provide you with a much more
19 detailed timeline --

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. Because I was kind of -- I was busy handling the ship,
22 you know --

23 Q. Sure. Of course.

24 A. -- I wasn't really looking at time that well, but I
25 found that on my notes here, I've got times just to kind of help

1 guide me through what we did. So, first off all we were there to
2 do that day is underway training, it was the second of two days
3 that we do for each vessel, underway -- pre-delivery underway
4 training, and what we called this run is the "into the night time
5 run." They're some eight hour scheduled training runs, so we
6 start during daylight savings time at 1300 in the afternoon, but
7 we start out pre-underway briefs. And we typically run until
8 about 2100 into the evening, just to show the crews the
9 characteristics of the boat, the equipment and the such, what it
10 looks like after dark. So that's what we were doing that day. So
11 we arrived in the vessels about 12:30 that afternoon, the 13th of
12 April. At 1300, we commenced are pre-underway safety brief, and
13 agenda -- training agenda briefing with all riding in attendance.
14 We discussed the weather -- approaching weather, the forecast was
15 some random thunder storms with 35 knot winds and seas three to
16 five feet, but the forecast started diminishing afterwards, and we
17 decided that we had time before the weather would approach us to
18 run out to our training location, which is just a few miles east
19 of Port Fourchon off Elmer's Island, where I've been it's kind of
20 an open area where there's no platform, you're right there, so you
21 get a little area to do our training. So that's where -- you
22 know, we decided to go ahead and make our way out there, and let
23 the line of showers pass. To put that into context about the
24 weather that evening, we were in a pattern at that time those few
25 weeks where they had these low pressures coming from west to east

1 periodically every few days, and so it was just another line
2 coming, a line of storms coming through, so we figured we'd just
3 make our way out there and let the line pass, and then continue on
4 with our training on the back side of the line of storms. At
5 approximately 1330, we witnessed the -- while we was doing our
6 slide-offs and the such, the *Seacor Power* did pass us, heading
7 southbound in Bayou la Fourche, and our moor location is at
8 Bollinger Fourchon south yard, in Port Fourchon. It was a topic
9 of discussion with me and crew members of the Coast Guard that
10 were in the pilot house. They're always -- you know, it's an
11 unusual style vessel, so that's typical that these Coast Guard
12 members question those boats, because they're different. So we
13 talked about it and told them how it worked at Aries Marine at one
14 time as a captain, plus we've built lift barges here at Bollinger
15 and have sea trialed numerous lift barges over the years here at
16 Bollinger's. It's kind of explained what kind of work they do,
17 it's a -- the *Seacor Power's* a unique barge in that its crane
18 design and that it tracks around its legs unlike most barges have
19 the cranes on a separate pedestal, so it's just always -- you
20 know, that particular boat is -- it's always interested me, I've
21 been knowing that boat for years, that they had designed it, but -
22 - so it was just a topic of discussion, sort of interesting to
23 note that we saw that and talked about it as it left out. At
24 1400, we got underway after equipment light-offs and pre-underway
25 checks were complete. At approximately 1430, I was outbound in

1 the jetty at Vale Pass. I had kind of caught up to the *Seacor*
2 *Power*, they were at buoys one and two heading offshore. I did
3 mention to the crew members how lift barges are. You have to be
4 careful, usually five foots seas was the rule of thumb always went
5 by, not running it over that, but the forecast wasn't foreseeing
6 more than five foot there towards Port Fourchon anyway. I wasn't
7 sure about anything, I just mentioned to them how -- told another
8 story about how one time, I left out with a lift barge at --
9 jacked up, just out the channel about three days, waiting for
10 weather to pass. Just something lift barges do, and I thought
11 maybe that's what they were planning on doing. I wasn't sure with
12 that, but I knew they were outbound heading south from the jetty
13 at Port Fourchon. I took an east heading, running out like I said
14 to the training location over at Caminada, and we arrived there
15 about 1500 that afternoon, or 3:00 that afternoon, approximate
16 location about three miles south of Caminada Pass. I gave the
17 helm to the crew, Coast Guard crew. Under my supervision, we
18 commenced training. The actual training evolution was a shaft
19 locking training evolution, and the weather was getting close at
20 this point. The line of storms was getting close, and we were
21 tightly secured up there fairly close to the beach there at Ellis
22 Island in clear area. Approximately 1600, the line of
23 thunderstorms reached us. The winds were a lot more than
24 forecasted. I personally witnessed 80 miles per hour -- our 80
25 knot winds on our gauge as we were holding the ship. And the

1 state sustained for a few minutes also, too, it was kind of --
2 kind of took us all by surprise, obviously. Very heavy wash out
3 rain, we just held position, monitoring radar, navigation
4 equipment closely, anticipating the weather will pass. So and --
5 we started hearing distress calls on channel 16 from a couple of
6 other vessels in the nearby area in VHF range. There was a little
7 tug boat right off of the Barataria Pass; it was mostly people
8 that were scared. They were kind of scared of the washed out and
9 heavy wind conditions. But we were listening, again we're mostly
10 taking care of ourselves in this situation with the 80-knot winds.
11 And then at around -- it was about -- again, times are not exact
12 here -- about 1630-ish, we started hearing reports of an
13 overturned lift barge off of Port Fourchon. We started getting
14 coordinates approximately six miles away from us. I immediately
15 knew who they were, given like I said, given that I had just seen
16 them heading outbound right there, the *Seacor Power*. I took the
17 helm from the Coast Guard crew, and I started slowly making my way
18 toward that area. Again, the weather had started to diminish by
19 then, you know the line had passed, the winds had come down
20 probably about 35, 40-knot wind by this time out of the east,
21 northeast. Seas was still about -- and I left out, forgot to
22 mention the sea state -- when I left out, probably about 2- to
23 3-foot seas I guess? And then out of the weather came through you
24 know, it came up to like 3- to 5-ish by this point, and I started
25 making my way towards the -- the rain was slowly diminishing. I

1 called my supervisor at Bollinger Shipyard, Mark Mollen, and I let
2 him know what was going on, and that I was going to go take a look
3 and see what was -- what happened. About 1700, after I got off
4 the phone, my supervisor started getting a visual of the capsized
5 lift barge. Just to note, I heard -- I believe there was another
6 lift barge that was set up on a platform, kind of to the east side
7 of the Power. They saw me heading that way and he got out on
8 channel 16, saying the Coast Guard was on location. So I got on
9 channel 16, I made a statement, just letting people know that we
10 were a pre-commissioned Coast Guard boat being ran by a shipyard
11 crew, and was there to help like any other good Samaritan. You
12 know, it was a unique situation for us given that. Always a
13 little concerned about that, because we have the boats there, they
14 looked like a Coast Guard boat but we're not really a Coast Guard
15 crew; we don't have all that outfitting equipment that a Coast
16 Guard boat would have to be able to help out in these kinds of
17 situations. I did put that statement out on the channel 16 to let
18 these guys know that we were there to help, and we were there. At
19 that point, I told the prospective commanding officer of
20 Lieutenant [REDACTED] that we needed to get a handle on the
21 person in the pilot house and for him to decide who he wanted to
22 help out, as these Coast Guard crews are very experienced but
23 still unqualified on board this particular vessel, plus we don't
24 carry lifesaving equipment that the Coast Guard normally does. I
25 directed my sea trial crew to take lead on small boat rescue

1 operations in the event we could attempt one. Again, this was all
2 preliminary, just upon arriving, because I have a couple of them
3 that are -- one of them especially, like a designated little -- a
4 boat driver, he's a really good small boat driver. So we kind of
5 got a handle on everything, the crew did a great job of helping
6 with the situation, I got -- Lieutenant [REDACTED] handled all the
7 VHF comms with sector, he had an OS1 on board like I say, did a
8 great job recording everything as it went down, keeping us in line
9 with who's who and what was what. About ten minutes later, about
10 1710 I believe, we arrived on scene, there, at the barge. And I
11 slowly set up, I was very concerned about all the debris in the
12 water, the cranes, the lane, it was a tough situation, because you
13 know it was a big barge, and you know you want to get close but
14 you can't get too close because you're not sure where these cranes
15 may have landed, boom crane, booms, legs, stuff like that. But we
16 immediately started to find persons using our infrared camera on
17 board the ship, FRCs, hanging onto a piece of the cabin structure
18 that was sticking out of the water, kind of on the port side of
19 the Power, a kind of forward part of the cabin. The main deck
20 part of the cabin had a little piece of it sticking above that
21 other structure. It was hard for me to tell, I wasn't -- we had a
22 crewmember on the camera looking, holding, training the camera on
23 the spot. But again, I was holding the ship and 40 knot wind was
24 increasing sea state, and I was just focused on holding the ship
25 and maintaining a proper distance at that point. But I did glance

1 over and see the five persons holding onto that section of the
2 cabin there. Again, this time the full angle of the barge, the
3 way it sunk and the angle of the wind, it was kind of more of a
4 easterly wind, which was slowly shifting. It started with a
5 little northeast aspect and then it was east, and then as the
6 evening went on, the wind slowly shifted east maybe a southeast
7 aspect to it, which made it harder as time went on for those guys
8 to hold onto that section of the cabin. They almost had a lead at
9 first, but then it went away after the wind shifted and the seas
10 got rougher as the evening went on. So I decided to go ahead and
11 give the small boat a shot. Got a team together, my two sea trial
12 crew members got in and one of the CHAN instructors -- we also had
13 three instructors from our training group on board with us. So
14 one of those guys, former Coast Guard, he had experience with
15 those kind of things. So those were the three liability wise from
16 Bollinger perspective, I figured would be the best to get in a
17 small boat and go make an attempt. So we launched them, they made
18 their way towards the power. As they got on scene, they quickly
19 realized that the sea state was way too rough and all the
20 structure -- there was no way they could've got anywhere close to
21 where these guys were without endangering themselves. It was
22 already -- honestly, as soon as I lost them, I regretted it.
23 Because it was just too much for that small boat, in that
24 condition. So we got them back, we got them back on the boat
25 safely, thank God. And then like I said, I just -- we -- then

1 Captain Fecedo started handling comms in sector, I kind of
2 directed the -- I kind of set up the FRC as best I could, you
3 know, towards the west side of the barge just in case -- I wanted
4 them to see this, I wanted to get a good view with the camera, but
5 then at the same time, I wanted to be in a position where if one
6 of them was -- got washed off, or fell off, or decided to jump
7 off, what I could've retrieved one, we carry a Jacobs ladder, so I
8 directed the crew to set up the Jacobs ladder, have it ready in
9 case we needed it, set up the vessel, and then sure enough, it was
10 -- I'm not sure, honestly, what time this Zachary Louvier fell
11 off, washed off, jumped off, I'm not sure exactly how he got off
12 the barge, but he got into the water quickly. The FRCs are
13 equipped with a appended controller to plug in, a little handheld
14 controller, quickly -- we had it ready, I went out on the bridge
15 way, in fact you can see on this picture, you see on the -- see I
16 don't even know who took all these pictures to be honest with you,
17 but you see my jean leg. I see my jean in the pictures of us
18 retrieving Zachary out of the water. That's me standing there
19 with the appended controller, holding the ship as best I could
20 with a little release side for him, so we could retrieve him out
21 the water. But thankfully we got him up out the water quickly. I
22 remember thinking, right there, it was -- if only all the rest of
23 them could only just set themselves loose right there, could've
24 picked them all up, probably at that point, because it did get
25 rougher, especially with that shifting more to the south wind

1 condition after that time. So I just stayed there, set up as
2 close as I thought safe to the jack up, and was kind of waiting it
3 out, you know, that other Good Samaritan boats in the distance
4 searching the debris field, they picked up four of the people out
5 the water thankfully, four different boats picked up one person
6 each. I guess it was about 1930-ish, it was a little time before
7 that, sometime between 1900 and 1930, one of the RBMs from Station
8 Grand Isle arrived on scene, and they were able to hold position.
9 They tried, they got in kind of similar to what we did with our
10 small boat, tried to get in really close to them and then realized
11 it was just way too much structure. They had a heliport, that's
12 why the *Seacor Power* went right behind it, right into the heli
13 side, making it -- it was right there. You could see the waves
14 crashing against the heliport, so kind of -- and you couldn't even
15 see the half legs, so I wasn't sure where that thing was. But
16 yeah, they kind of went up close at first and then backed off a
17 little bit safe distance again between me and the lift barge.
18 Just sitting there keeping an eye on the persons and approximately
19 1930, the (indiscernible) of the five persons got into the water
20 and they retrieved that person safely out of the water, that RBM
21 from Station Grand Isle.

22 And then by then it was starting to get dark so what I did
23 then -- and then a second RBM showed up from Station Grand Isle,
24 another one from Station Grand Isle, another RBM showed up. So as
25 it got dark I repositioned myself a little bit more to the south

1 of the barge so that we could keep our -- two of our spotlights
2 shining on the area of the cabin to keep a light on the
3 individuals. And then the two RBMs kind of stayed in position to
4 the -- I guess more to the east side in case one of them would
5 have got in the water so they could have picked them up quickly
6 out the water.

7 Again, the seas were increasing. By then, I would say it was
8 getting pretty rough there as it got dark around like 1930
9 timeframe. It was probably getting up a good six foot -- 6- to
10 8-foot seas by then. Wind was still blowing 35, 40 knots
11 (indiscernible) I was surprised how the rain had passed but the
12 wind just kept blowing hard like that. It was unusual. About
13 2015 or so the Bristow chopper came on scene and immediately tried
14 lowering a rescue swimmer. Again, the angle of the barge
15 (indiscernible) dangling down from a chopper from an aerial
16 perspective, they couldn't really even see the persons as the guy
17 was coming down. And he just made it -- the situation was just --
18 the wind was blowing into the gap of the hand railings on the top
19 of the barge that was sticking out all the way down the deck to
20 where the persons were and the seas were crashing right into
21 there. He made an attempt, tried, and quickly realized there was
22 no way he was going to be able to get to where they were safely
23 with all the debris and the structure of the barge. If he would
24 have tried to get into the water with the waves crashing against
25 him. I mean, it was bad. You could see it on the infrared video

1 how bad the 40-knot winds were just rushing, those waves crashing
2 into that barge, it was horrible.

3 So he went back up into the chopper. They stayed for a
4 little while -- couple minutes later they came over the radio and
5 said that the best thing they could do is go back down and provide
6 them with life jackets and a radio. So they did. They went back
7 down and lowered and got them those life jackets, the whistle life
8 jackets and a hand-held radio I believe.

9 Approximately 2045 or so this guy Jay, which I later learned
10 (indiscernible) Lombardo (PH) his last name, he had the radio. He
11 started -- we got (indiscernible) and you know, obviously he was
12 in distress. Again, the shifting seascape was making it harder
13 and harder for them to continue to hold on. We talked to him.
14 [REDACTED] the perspective CO, the lieutenant of FIC handled the
15 radio calmly. He did a great job talking to Jay, you know, trying
16 to keep him calm, letting him know that we were trying. You know,
17 we're trying to come up with a plan to help them. You know, we
18 were pretty helpless, though, to be honest with you. But you
19 know, just a horrible situation.

20 About 2100, 2130-ish, I'm not sure of the timeframe for sure.
21 Like I say, there's notes that are more precise than mine. The
22 third of the five persons washed into the water. Like I say, I
23 was positioned a little further south away from the
24 (indiscernible) side, but the two RBMs were in good position, but
25 the person just slipped right by. That's how bad it had gotten.

1 They tried (indiscernible) back down. We tried to find him and he
2 just, you know, the Bristow chopper had to go back and refuel. A
3 few minutes later they came back out and they -- soon as they got
4 back they went out with their spotlight trying to find that third
5 person that we knew had washed into the water. Well, Jay had told
6 us and then we could see on the flare that there was only two
7 people left, with the flare -- the infrared camera.

8 So you know, that happens. And I believe the next day they
9 found the person drowned, unfortunately.

10 So by the end, I guess somewhere around 2200, 10:00 that
11 evening, Jay and the other person -- he started talking -- he told
12 us about this hatch because it was getting so difficult for him to
13 hold on that they were going to start (indiscernible) trying to
14 get into this hatch he kept talking about. So they kind of made
15 their way in there. He did come out once or twice in that
16 timeframe, looks like 10 -- between 10 and 10:30-ish -- you know,
17 Jay did and there was body communication still and it was about
18 that same time we were waiting -- [REDACTED] the CO of the boat, the
19 perspective CO was telling them we're waiting on a Coast Guard
20 chopper to come out. Plus they had the Coast Guard airplane. I'm
21 not sure what the acronym is for that plane, but it was flying
22 around discussing maybe dropping a life raft in the water for them
23 (indiscernible). You know, every time they would assess the
24 situation they would realize that the condition was just too, too
25 dangerous, too unsafe to try and do anything really for them

1 unfortunately.

2 One of the RBMs (indiscernible) after they searched for the
3 person in the water. The other one that had retrieved the person
4 ran him into Fourchon and came back out, but his time, I remember,
5 was getting limited. They had to (indiscernible) had made his way
6 close to me. He was right behind me holding position
7 (indiscernible) was on scene. So about that time I started
8 talking to the CO, [REDACTED] about going -- you know, because we
9 were not set up with, you know, watch duty. You know, we was only
10 supposed to be going to an 8-hour run. By this time it was going
11 -- we'd been out there a while with these heavy conditions. I was
12 starting to get worried about us, fatigue wise. So letting [REDACTED]
13 know, the inspector know, that we weren't going to be able to stay
14 out there all night long. And that I wanted to run in after the
15 Coast Guard chopper got on scene. So he got on the telephone,
16 told him what I wanted to do, and again, we stopped hearing from
17 Jay. It had been a while, over a half hour that we had heard from
18 him. So you know, there was nothing more we could have done out
19 there. Plus we had (indiscernible) down there. Been like three-
20 and-a-half, four hours (indiscernible) that he was on the ship. I
21 kind of wanted to get him to the dock also, too, like all the
22 other Good Samaritan boats had done by then.

23 About 2315 the Coast Guard chopper arrived. He started doing
24 the situation assessment like they do. About 2330 or so Coast
25 Guard chopper came over the radio and said he agreed with the

1 Bristow chopper assessment of the situation with not being able to
2 attempt a rescue or lower anyone down in that situation. So I
3 made the call to go ahead and start making our way back into Port
4 Fourchon.

5 Like I say, the Coast Guard chopper was on scene and a Stem
6 Star 4 (PH) was right behind me to kind of ease up and kind of
7 take my place with a spotlight to keep light on the piece of the
8 cabin that was sticking up out of the water.

9 So I made my way in. I arrived, it was about -- just after
10 midnight about 0015 I arrived back at our (indiscernible)
11 location. The wind was still blowing 35 knots. It was still
12 surprising to me how bad current (indiscernible) was unbelievable
13 because of the wind driven current inbound, flood tide was pouring
14 into the pass and to the port. It was crazy weather situation
15 that night.

16 But we moored safely and immediately we had all the first
17 responders there to pick up Zachary and take him away. And that's
18 pretty much it.

19 Q. Captain, I really appreciate the detail there. That was a
20 huge help, thank you. Because of that, though, I have quite a few
21 follow-up questions, I hope you don't mind. The sea trail -- or
22 the training that you were going to do, was that -- did you
23 intentionally -- was this heavy weather training on purpose? In
24 other words, did you get under way --

25 A. No. Oh no, not at all. No, we decided to go regardless of

1 this weather that was coming anticipating (indiscernible) calm as
2 weather as possible. Especially, this training is not operational
3 training. It's training -- getting -- it's familiarization
4 training to teach the Coast Guard crews the equipment on the FRCs
5 mainly. It's not operational training at all. It's just to
6 familiarize them with the cutters that we provide them. They do
7 operational training after delivery and get qualified for
8 operations well after delivery of the cutter.

9 Q. Okay. What was your -- how many people did you have on board
10 that day?

11 A. We were approximately 35 of us (indiscernible) -- my sea
12 trial crew is -- the basic crew, the shipyard were five of us.
13 It's myself, we have a leaderman, a (indiscernible), an outside
14 machinist and an electrician, which are very experienced boat
15 people. And then we also had those three instructors from our
16 training division (indiscernible) on board with us. So we went
17 eight of us and then the crew of the vessel, which I believe is
18 27, so that would have made 35 total.

19 MR. MUISE: Okay. I'm going to stop there and hand it over
20 to Mike Richards and Melissa Huffman. Just -- if you could just
21 limit the questions to the pre-incident weather information.
22 Mike, go ahead.

23 MR. RICHARDS: Sure, Marcel, thank you.

24 BY MR. RICHARDS:

25 Q. Hello, Captain, Mike Richards, NTSB. Couple questions. I

1 just want to step through the weather information that you were
2 privy to prior to your departure and then while underway prior to
3 the accident time. So with regard to before you departed, what
4 forecast were you looking at? And what I mean is where did you
5 receive that? Was that a government forecast; do you have a prior
6 vendor that provides you that information?

7 A. Yeah. Well, I typically will watch the news every morning,
8 you know, before I get up I'm always watching the weather on the
9 local news out of New Orleans for that local weather. But I
10 typically -- I use this app called Windfinder App, which has a
11 good -- shows the details, like they have a Port Fourchon section;
12 the (indiscernible) Offshore Oil Port has a place on there.
13 Typically I use the Windfinder app to get my forecast from.

14 Q. Okay. And that's what you looked at that morning?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Thank you, sir. And I believe you said you were expecting
17 winds of 35 knots or greater. Can you repeat what you were
18 expecting that morning before you were expecting that morning
19 before you departed?

20 A. I was expecting about 35-knot winds as the line of
21 thunderstorms passed. But I was also expecting it to diminish
22 back down to 15 knots. I believe the seas forecast didn't have it
23 getting over 3 to 5 foot at any point that evening.

24 Q. Okay. And just to be clear, did the Windfinder app tell you
25 about the thunderstorms or were you aware that there were going to

1 be thunderstorms from another source?

2 A. I was tracking the line of storms actually using the Weather
3 Channel app with their radar feature.

4 Q. I see, okay. Thank you. So as far as once you got underway
5 -- well, let me ask you this -- on the bridge of that vessel --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- are there systems that will provide you with weather
8 information while you're under way? Now what I mean by provide
9 is, you could either use that system to get information or it will
10 automatically alert you or print out. What systems do you have
11 onboard that vessel for that?

12 A. We (indiscernible) Navtex receiver that does weather related
13 information (indiscernible) mariners. Honestly I'm not sure if we
14 -- we probably had it turned on, yeah. Through training we
15 definitely would have had it turned on.

16 Q. Okay. And along with the Navtex receiver did you also have a
17 Inmarsat -- it's Inmarsat-C SafetyNET?

18 A. Yeah, we do have Inmarsat. It's GMDSS radios.

19 Q. Okay.

20 (Crosstalk)

21 Q. Sorry, I cut you off, sir.

22 A. That's okay.

23 Q. So that morning -- or that afternoon, excuse me -- while you
24 were underway, prior to the accident time do you recall either the
25 Navtex receiver or the Inmarsat-C SafetyNET receiver going off?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. (Indiscernible) any calls on channel 16 of any weather
4 advisories prior to the line of storms passing.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. Not that I recall.

7 Q. Just one more question and then I'll pass it to Ms. Huffman
8 at the Weather Service. You mentioned turning off the Navtex
9 receiver. You believe you had it on that day -- you would have
10 had it on because of the training. Is it common to turn off the
11 Navtex receiver while underway?

12 A. No, we typically have it on. Again, we sea trial; we're
13 always testing. We're always testing all of this equipment so
14 they're typically always on. I honestly I don't really use it
15 that much. You know, like I say, with in this modern day Navtex
16 is kind of an older type of equipment as part of the GMDSS outfit
17 (indiscernible) GMDSS kind so it's not where I drive the ship
18 from. It's back there. You know, I do look at it sometimes, but
19 yeah, it's typically on when we're on training and sea trial runs.
20 But sometimes I turn it off when I'm just running here in the
21 bayou or certain situations. I don't always have it on.

22 Q. Okay. And so I'm going to ask a stupid question because I'm
23 not -- I'm going to admit something to you -- I'm not a mariner so
24 I'm learning quite a bit. But what would be the reason -- I'm
25 thinking perhaps Navtex would be a nuisance if it's always making

1 noises, but I don't know so let me just ask. What would be the
2 reason that someone or you, I guess in this case, would want to
3 turn off the Navtex receiver for certain voyages?

4 A. Not -- no particular reason. I felt (indiscernible) really
5 felt that necessary to safely navigate the ship. I got all these
6 other resources that I get all my information from. And like I
7 say, it's usually on, however.

8 Q. Okay. And there was one question I did forget to ask. So
9 after you departed and were underway that afternoon, did you
10 receive any updated weather information after your departure,
11 before the accident time, or was what you left the port with all
12 you had?

13 A. Well, like I say, we were glancing at the line on our phones.
14 Not only me; I'm sure the crewmembers on board. We were watching
15 that line of storms pretty intently knowing that it was coming and
16 it was going to be -- you know, it looked pretty intense. You
17 know, we knew that line of storms was coming, which is why we
18 talked about it and why we -- you know, we decided that we had
19 enough time because we were monitoring it so closely we knew about
20 when it was going to get there. And we knew (indiscernible) set
21 ourself up on location in a safe spot to be able to ride it out.
22 Again, we're an FRC, very stable -- best Coast Guard cutter ever
23 built, built to handle this kind of stuff with the fancy
24 electronics and radar systems. So we knew we would be okay going
25 out there, holding position, riding out the line of storms and

1 then continue on with training after it would have passed.

2 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. Sir, thank you very much for your time.
3 This is really helpful to me. I guess Marcel will ask if
4 Ms. Huffman has any questions at this point.

5 MS. HUFFMAN: I just have a few follow-up questions.

6 BY MS. HUFFMAN:

7 Q. Captain Guidry, did you receive any warnings at all between
8 1430 and 1600?

9 A. No, I do not remember receiving any weather alerts other than
10 possibly on the Weather Channel app, maybe like the severe
11 thunderstorm warning, which is kind of typical. You know, it pops
12 up with the line of storms are coming. But I do not recall --
13 usually when they issue a small craft advisory and as such you
14 hear that on channel 16. And I do not recall hearing
15 (indiscernible) I don't recall hearing any being put out prior to
16 the storm arriving.

17 Q. Okay, thank you. And then have you ever seen within the
18 Weather Channel app the special marine warning?

19 A. You cut out a bit on that one. What's that?

20 Q. Apologies for that. Within the Weather Channel app, or
21 whatever app that you typically use to get weather information,
22 have you ever seen the special marine warning go out through that
23 app?

24 A. Not on the Weather Channel typically. It's not a marine app.
25 No, and the Windfinder does not give warnings like that. It's

1 just a forecast of sea conditions and wind -- wind and sea
2 conditions and moon cycles. It's just a good handy app for a
3 mariner to use to get that as far as weather goes. I've been
4 using it for years. It's usually very accurate. I deliver
5 (indiscernible) to Key West and I use it to check what the
6 forecasts are to employ (indiscernible) out in the middle of the
7 Gulf. I'm sure they're getting their data from NOAA because it's
8 a NOAA weather buoy that they give the forecasts and the
9 conditions from. And then also (indiscernible) Key West side
10 prior to departure each delivery trip and it's always right on
11 point. It's usually always fairly accurate as to what I end up
12 dealing with.

13 Q. Okay, thank you. And then just one final question. How do
14 you normally receive special marine warnings or any kind of marine
15 warning?

16 A. Well, those -- typically on channel 16 on VHF. They
17 typically come over on channel 16 on VHF.

18 Q. Okay, thank you.

19 A. All right.

20 MR. MUISE: Thank you, Melissa.

21 BY MR. MUISE:

22 Q. Captain, I'd like to talk a little bit about equipment now.
23 I heard you say that this isn't a fully equipped Coast Guard
24 cutter and I understand this is probably something I should have
25 asked Lieutenant [REDACTED] but what -- do you know what equipment

1 is not on board that should be there for a commissioned cutter for
2 lifesaving? And if you don't know --

3 A. Yeah, well -- right. I'm sure there's a lot of things that I
4 don't even know about that they have. We do carry our basic -- we
5 do have (indiscernible) basket. We obviously carry all our life
6 rings, our lifejackets as required for a vessel of that type to
7 carry. We do have all that. We have all our lifejackets, life
8 rings. A Jacob's ladder we carry. A hook pole. All those types
9 of equipment we do carry, okay. Now, I know the Coast Guard have,
10 like, what they call -- you know, like their suits, immersion
11 suits and the such to put on for hypothermia and such like that.
12 We're not required to carry that. They carry a lot more SCBA
13 firefighting equipment than we do. Again, we have two sets of
14 SBCAs that we carry onboard and our guys are trained for
15 firefighting. But it's more, like, along the lines of basic
16 commercial type vessel of that type we keep outfitted, but we
17 don't have the numbers like they have as far as immersion suits
18 and things like that, you know. DC gear, they carry a lot more
19 damage control gear than we do. Again, that's just for them to
20 use if they were to go to help people and such, I guess.

21 (Indiscernible) pumps we do carry them. We do have P100 pumps, P5
22 pump onboard the ship. Again, we do have that onboard, but like I
23 say all this outfit equipment that they receive, you know
24 knickknack (verbatim) stuff, I couldn't tell you exactly what all
25 they carry that we don't.

1 Q. (Indiscernible) Captain, a man overboard buoy or data marker
2 buoy? It's a buoy that you'd launch in a man overboard and it's
3 supposed to drift at the same rate as a person. Was one of those
4 onboard?

5 A. We don't have one. We have lift rafts, but we don't any of
6 those -- we don't have those types of buoys onboard.

7 Q. Okay. How about line throwing gun or line throwing
8 apparatus?

9 A. What's that?

10 Q. A line throwing apparatus or line throwing gun?

11 A. Oh no, no, we do not have a line throwing gun.

12 Q. Okay. Are you familiar with search and rescue transponders?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. At any time during the incident or during the response, did
15 you see one of those on your radar?

16 A. No. (Indiscernible) I bet you that thing went quick given
17 that wind situation. If it did deploy -- if they managed to get
18 it out (indiscernible) probably would have quickly made its way
19 away before I even arrived on scene the way the wind was blowing.

20 Q. Okay. The five people that were there when you arrived. So
21 the first one is Zach that you mentioned. How did you get him on
22 board?

23 A. Well, we saw him get into the water and maneuvered the ship
24 as best I could to kind of give him a little bit of a lead side
25 and we -- the crewmembers lined the side of the ship and as I got

1 close enough they threw life rings at him. He was not wearing a
2 lifejacket. They threw life rings at him. He was able to grab
3 one and they were able to help pull him closer to where the
4 Jacob's ladder was deployed at the bow of -- right forward bow
5 opening about mid ship. Again, right below where I was standing
6 with the portable controller and they reached down and helped grab
7 them and pulled them right up on the ship.

8 Q. Okay. And the second person -- I think I know who that is
9 that the RBM picked up. The third person that got swept away, do
10 you know who that was?

11 A. No.

12 Q. How about the fifth person that was with Jay; do you know who
13 that was?

14 A. No.

15 Q. The space that they crawled into, I think I know where they
16 were, but did they describe it at all? Like, was there water in
17 there or was there somewhere that they felt safe in?

18 A. Honestly, no. I wasn't -- like I said, it was busy. It was
19 so rough and I was handling the ship. I was glancing over at the
20 infrared camera every once in a while and I really never really
21 saw that night -- now, I have since then from the helicopter
22 photos that I've seen on the news, a hatch that I think they may
23 have gone into. It seemed like a square opening, which was kind
24 of on the side of the cabin right there and I'm thinking it may
25 have been that, but I honestly don't know what they were talking

1 about exactly where they crawled into. I could not see them from
2 handling the ship the way I was. We were a couple hundred yards
3 from them anyway.

4 Q. Right. I've got a few questions about your time at Aries, if
5 you don't mind, because you're the first lift boat captain that
6 we've talked to, other than Seacor. Which Aries boats were you
7 on?

8 A. What's that?

9 Q. Which lift boats at Aries?

10 A. Oh, God, that's a long time ago. So I was the captain on the
11 Ram 3 (PH) but you know, I had never ran lift barges before I went
12 there. My little story about lift barges is I used to run supply
13 boats and we would supply those things all the time and every once
14 in a while I'd have to go up on them to fax off my grocery orders
15 and lists and things and every time I'd go up there I was always
16 intrigued by the way these guys have such a good life, you know.
17 They were up there with Direct TV and cooks. So finally I
18 decided, you know, I need to make a career change and go work on
19 one of these things. So I went out, Aries Marine hired me. Of
20 course it's a different type of vessel so even though I was
21 already a captain they put me on as a mate. I worked on the Ram
22 6. I only worked on it for about a year. I worked on the Ram 6
23 as a mate for about six months working a 14 on/14 off schedule.
24 And then -- they were building new boats at the time so as another
25 new boat came out, the crew on the Ram 3 took a new boat and they

1 made me captain on the Ram 3, this other barge -- I think it was
2 175-foot legs on the Ram 3.

3 Q. I heard you mentioned that you were jacked up for several
4 days waiting on weather -- and understanding that every client is
5 different and every contract is different --

6 A. Right.

7 Q. -- if you do that are you on down time?

8 A. What do you mean, like --

9 Q. Like if you're waiting on weather are you off contract or are
10 you taking a hit on your --

11 A. No, not really. You know, that's lift barge business 101.
12 you know, it's -- I could tell you that when they made me captain
13 on the Ram 3 at Aries Marine, they took me in the operations
14 managers office and Dave Well (PH) told me that they had my back
15 no matter what I decided they would always have my back,
16 especially when it came to weather related issues and I always
17 felt comfortable not worrying about making a call to not run or go
18 ahead and jack down and lift up out the water, wait out weather if
19 need be. I didn't really concern myself about it. I been in a
20 situation -- the story I tell people is I loaded out in Cameron
21 one time for Texaco. A company man was on board and I told him a
22 cold front was coming and I wasn't going to make it out to the
23 location and, you know, they love to load the barges up at the
24 dock with personnel and equipment so the don't have to hire crew
25 boats and the such or whatever. So he said oh we gotta go anyway.

1 So I got underway, cleared the channel and jacked down before the
2 cold front hit and I sat there for like three days and the company
3 man was literally coming to me with tears in his eyes by the end
4 of the third day because it still was too rough to get underway.
5 But you know, it can get calm enough, you jack down and you
6 continue on. It's just lift barge business. You know, I'm not
7 sure about contracts and how payments go. It's just what you do
8 when you're a captain on a lift barge. You just do what's safe
9 first because everybody knows that it's a dangerous vessel to
10 operate.

11 MR. MUISE: Okay. Again, Captain, thank you for all the
12 detailed information. I'm going to hand it over to my colleague,
13 Andrew, now.

14 BY MR. EHLERS:

15 Q. And good morning, again, Captain. I just have a real short
16 set of questions. First of all, you described (indiscernible)
17 your crew, which is really helpful. Of your crew, how many have
18 Coast Guard licenses?

19 A. (Indiscernible) Bollinger crew?

20 Q. Yeah.

21 A. Yeah, contractually -- again, this is a government boat here.
22 Contractually it calls for only a licensed captain 500 tons or
23 greater, which I have a 3,000-ton international license. My crew,
24 the rest of the guys, are qualified but not certified. They do
25 not have licenses (indiscernible) sea trial crews.

1 Q. Okay. What kind of training do they get in search and rescue
2 equipment, that kind of stuff?

3 A. My crew, we do drills regularly. I try every -- you know,
4 between sea trial runs we do get a couple of runs in between. We
5 do the ABS, ABCU run, which is a 12-hour run. I like to kind of
6 perform underway drills on that day so we're not so heavily
7 involved with testing. Also, every time I leave with a new boat,
8 do trainings as we're being tugged down to that area where it's
9 safe for me to get underway, we always review the station bill and
10 go over all the duties that each of us have in the event of an
11 emergency. Again, we're not training to do any search and rescue;
12 we're training to -- well, except if it's our own man overboard
13 drills, firefighting drills, abandon ship. Those are the types of
14 trainings that we do. Plus, we periodically send sea trial crew
15 members threw firefighting training and then we outfit them with
16 their won SCBA outfit.

17 Q. Okay, that's helpful. And do they ever go through, like, BST
18 training, basic training (indiscernible) firefighting?

19 A. Yeah, we use the LSU firefighting school. It does
20 (indiscernible) I'm not sure if they're (indiscernible) certified,
21 but it does go along the same line, marine vessel firefighting
22 training.

23 Q. Okay, all right. On the two training trips that you had
24 taken, did that include any type of search and rescue maneuvering
25 or anything like that?

1 A. Well, the first day is small boat training mostly where we
2 just -- the day before we had got underway. The first underway
3 day -- again, it's mostly equipment (indiscernible) and then we do
4 small boat training, which is just launch and recovery. Very slow
5 controlled waves, the young crewmembers just trying to get
6 qualified. But it's just launch and recovery, coming in
7 alongside. And then we do a little performance demonstration,
8 emergency stop with the FRC, anchoring evolution.

9 Q. Okay, all right. So when you launched the boat on the
10 accident day, was that just your crew; no Coast Guard members?

11 A. Yes, it was just our crew. None of the precommissioning was
12 on board the small boat.

13 Q. Okay. And how many crewmembers did you have onboard there?
14 I know you mentioned the coxswain was a really skilled coxswain.
15 Who else did you have onboard?

16 A. We had -- I had another sea trial crewmembers who's another
17 experienced guy. Actually the other one was a very experienced
18 guy, been with us since the beginning. And then one of the Chand
19 instructors, there were three of them in the small boat.

20 Q. Okay, all right. And then only other question I have for you
21 -- you mentioned that -- I think when the rains hit you had 80-
22 mile-per-hour winds. How long did that 80-mile-per-hour winds
23 last; do you have a good estimate?

24 A. I would say a good 15, 20 minutes. It was pretty sustained.
25 Maybe up to a half hour. Kind of hard to say because, you know.

1 A good 15, 20 minutes it held up really strong like that. Way too
2 long for my blood. It was kind of surprising, but like I say, we
3 just held position and monitored the radar and radios and the AIS
4 on the navigation on the charting system. There was a few boats
5 in the areas keeping a close eye on them making sure they didn't
6 get to close to us.

7 Q. Okay. And then after that 80-mile-per-hour, that's when it
8 subsided to 30- to 40-mile-per-hour? And then --

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. -- sustained?

11 A. (Indiscernible) pretty quickly came down to that 35-, 40-knot
12 winds and it just sustained that all night.

13 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. Thank you, very much,
14 Captain.

15 MR. MUISE: Sorry about that. Captain Phillips, would you
16 like to get started for the Coast Guard?

17 LT. [REDACTED] Marcel, this is Lieutenant [REDACTED] I believe
18 Captain Phillips had a department call, unless she chimes in, at
19 around 10. So we'll be -- I had a couple questions.

20 MR. MUISE: Go ahead, Anthony, thank you.

21 BY LT. [REDACTED]

22 Q. This is Lieutenant [REDACTED] (Indiscernible).

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. Just had a couple questions. We've kind of went through a
25 lot of it. Did you -- you know, the way you guys said you were

1 having conversations about the vessel and kind of talking about
2 the makeup of the vessel when it was leaving port. Did you
3 observe anything abnormal about vessel or anything that seemed odd
4 to you about its makeup or, you know, how -- the deck, anything
5 abnormal that you noticed?

6 A. Right, that's the best question so far. I thought someone
7 was going to ask me that. No, I did not notice anything unusual.
8 It looked good. You know, I didn't really -- I wasn't really
9 paying much attention to that, but I think back on it and
10 obviously I was thinking of that and from what I remember -- and I
11 did look at it a lot heading and it looked good. It looked not
12 overloaded. I didn't see anything unusual about its, you know,
13 floating condition at all.

14 Q. It may not have been something you picked up on. Did you
15 happen to notice the state of any of the doors opened or closed,
16 watertight doors, things like that?

17 A. No. No, I can't say that I did.

18 Q. Okay. And I was just curious, so when you were on scene and
19 you guys were kind of assessing the situation, you know, sizing up
20 whether you guys could, you know, attempt any rescue, what was the
21 closest that you were really able to get to the vessel safely?

22 A. That's a tough one. You know, at one point probably in the
23 beginning I probably got within about 100 -- I'd hate to say 100
24 yards because that's probably really close. About 150 yards,
25 couple 100 yards. I can tell you that the more I saw all the

1 stuff -- and I did notice one of the crane booms a little later
2 that I didn't notice at first, was sticking out. I think one of
3 the cranes kind of slid down the leg and the boom was still
4 extended out, like towards the south a bit. And that kind of
5 surprised me because I realized that I had got dangerously close
6 to that crane boom when I first arrived. I didn't realize that it
7 had -- sticking out that far away from it. So I'd say a couple
8 100 yards or so; it's hard to tell.

9 Q. I appreciate it. That's the only questions I had sticking
10 out in my head. So thank you.

11 A. All right.

12 MR. MUISE: [REDACTED] please.

13 BY MR. [REDACTED]

14 Q. Yeah, Captain Guidry, the crane boom, can you elaborate on
15 that again a little bit more. You said it was sticking out
16 further towards the south. Like, it had came out its cradle or
17 anything?

18 A. Like it slid down the leg. It seemed like it was maybe --
19 it's hard to tell because all I saw was the wash of the top of the
20 base of the crane and then I noticed -- when I noticed that, I
21 looked out and I did notice the waves crashing around the boom,
22 which was further out -- kind of, I believe it was like south --
23 like, that would have been its port leg crane probably. It was
24 out there (indiscernible) away from the barge it seemed like. I
25 was surprised for that.

1 Q. Oh, okay. Yeah, I got you. I think that's it. I mean, you
2 did a good job of explaining everything in detail. As I was
3 taking notes to ask questions you kind of went back and covered
4 them so it was a great story.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. Great recollection.

7 A. Hopefully I can help out.

8 MR. MUISE: Captain, in the interest of transparency, one of
9 my NTSB colleagues, Mike Kucharski, has joined us. Mike, do you
10 have any follow-up questions for us.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: No, thank you. No follow up.

12 MR. MUISE: Okay, thanks. ABS, please?

13 MR. PRESTON: John Preston with ABS.

14 BY MR. PRESTON:

15 Q. Thank you, Captain, for explaining all this to us. Does the
16 US -- does the Coast Guard cutter that you were piloting, does it
17 have any cameras or recording devices in it?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. It does? So were they on anytime during that day, do you
20 know, recording any of this?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay.

23 MR. MUISE: John, this is Marcel at NTSB. We have all that
24 recording. We're just having some technical challenges accessing
25 it, but we'll get that to everybody.

1 MR. PRESTON: Okay, thank you.

2 BY MR. PRESTON:

3 Q. The other question I was going to ask is can you please
4 describe, I guess, the condition of the *Seacor Power* when you got
5 there? I understood that part of the accommodations was out of
6 the water. Could you see, like, one deck or two decks or could
7 you see all three decks?

8 A. Yeah, the piece that was sticking out was the very, I guess
9 -- you know, it was on -- it was laying on its -- well, the port
10 side was what was sticking up out the water. And the piece that
11 was -- the piece of cabin was the port side forward part, the main
12 deck, the lower main deck cabin. That's all that was sticking up,
13 a little piece of it still right there.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. They have a stack, which was a little above it kind of that
16 is three smoke stacks that exhaust that stick out right above that
17 section, which would be more, like, right off -- overboard on the
18 port side right there.

19 Q. Okay, excellent, understood. And then one clarification,
20 when you were discussing the wind earlier, I heard two different
21 units. Which unit is the wind gauge, the anemometer, on the
22 cutters?

23 A. What's the question?

24 Q. The anemometer on the cutters, is it knots or miles an hour?

25 A. It was in knots.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Definitely knots, yes.

3 Q. Okay. So I understand all the discussion about 80 was 80
4 knots?

5 A. 80 knots, yes. I saw, I saw 80. I personally looked at the
6 gauge while I was handling the ship or watching -- actually,
7 (indiscernible) when the 80 knot winds was coming I had the crew
8 holding the ship. They did a great job. I was just kind of
9 watching them hold the ship, the helm person was holding the ship,
10 bow into the seas, into the wind. And just kind of waiting it
11 out, you know, monitoring all the equipment and it was steady 80-
12 knot winds.

13 MR. PRESTON: Okay. That's all I have. Thank you, very
14 much, sir.

15 MR. MUISE: Seacor, please.

16 MR. CENAC: Good morning, (indiscernible) Michael Cenac,
17 Seacor Marine. Thank you and your crew for all your service. I
18 don't have any further questions.

19 MR. MUISE: Okay. Thank you, Michael.

20 Mike Richards, we talked about preincident weather earlier.
21 Would you like to continue with your line of questioning?

22 MR. RICHARDS: I do have one follow-up question regarding
23 weather information. Actually, Mike Richards, NTSB.

24 BY MR. RICHARDS:

25 Q. Following up on something that hasn't been asked. And again,

1 I'm not a mariner so these may seem kind of silly, but I just want
2 to understand.

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. So channel 16, I presume -- the only way that this would work
5 for someone to get weather information from channel 16 is if
6 you've tuned your radio to channel 16 and have it turned on; is
7 that correct?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. Okay. So when you get a weather alert or weather -- type of
10 weather information -- and again, I presume that if it comes over
11 channel 16 it's going to be important.

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. Okay. What does that sound like? Is that provided by a
14 human voice; is that an automated robot type of voice; what does
15 it sound like; how does it come across?

16 A. No, it's a human voice. It's a Coast Guard person at the
17 sector giving Pom-Pom, Pom-Pom call out and, you know, they say
18 marine -- you know when it's coming. They -- it's -- channel 16
19 is a distress and emergency channel only, trust me. They're
20 constantly reminding us of that when we try and talk a little bit
21 on channel 16. So -- and but you're required to monitor it so
22 every boat should have their channel 16 up and monitoring it
23 underway. And they have an array of antennas, even though VHF is
24 line of sight, they have an array of antennas spread out along the
25 coast line. So it disseminates out into the gulf probably, you

1 know, with antennas 30, 30 miles or so from the coastline. And
2 you hear them when they have these messages or they'll pass along
3 even, you know, minor distress messages or EPIRB signals that
4 they're receiving. You know, that's what channel 16 is all about.

5 Q. Okay. Are these alerts preceded by an audible tone, an alert
6 tone?

7 A. No, it's not like that, no.

8 Q. Okay. And just to confirm, I believe you said that prior to
9 the accident time you did not hear a weather alert come across on
10 channel 16; is that correct?

11 A. No, not that I can recall.

12 Q. Okay. But I believe you said that you did hear something
13 later in the afternoon, following the accident time; is that
14 correct?

15 A. Actually, I'm sure -- you know, channel 16, I'm sure -- what
16 they were doing is disseminating other -- because that wasn't the
17 only incident that day. That wasn't the only boat that got in
18 trouble. There was other boats -- in fact, some small boats
19 capsized. They had a lot of little things going on, obviously,
20 with that weather event and they were, you know, disseminating
21 that information over channel 16 so other mariners can know about
22 it. But we were -- [REDACTED] the prospective CO aboard with me, he
23 was on 16 relaying information to sector and the other Good
24 Samaritan ships were all talking to each other on 16 also that
25 day. So we kept it pretty, pretty used up.

1 Q. Okay. Okay. So how does channel 22 work with weather
2 information? I believe someone said something about channel 22.
3 Is that, is that also a source, as well?

4 A. Yes, that -- channel -- now that's not something you monitor.
5 That's a channel that the Coast Guard has, 21, 22, 81, 82, 83
6 alpha, all those channels. Those are other Coast Guard channels
7 that you switch to they'll ask you -- when they do their
8 dissemination sometimes they'll tell you that they'll disseminate,
9 like, informational type messages on channel 21 or 22 alpha to
10 switch to it. And then they'll just do it on those channels
11 instead of doing it on channel 16.

12 Q. Okay. That's -- this is helpful. Okay. Just one more
13 question, and this is, I guess, your opinion; I'm just trying to
14 get some context here as to how maybe 16 gets used. So with the
15 weather that you encountered, 80-knot winds, would that be a
16 condition that you would have expected to hear some type of alert
17 come across on channel 16?

18 A. Yes, definitely.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. (Indiscernible) forecast, some kind of anomaly happened that
21 night.

22 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. This is very helpful for me. Thank you
23 very much for your time. Marcel, I don't have any other
24 questions. I'm not sure if Melissa has a follow-up, though.

25 MR. MUISE: Melissa, go ahead.

1 MS. HUFFMAN: No follow-up questions, thank you.

2 MR. MUISE: Okay. Captain, I just had one more follow up,
3 but I'll save that for last. Does anybody else have any other
4 follow-up questions? [REDACTED] I see, go ahead.

5 BY MR. [REDACTED]

6 Q. Hey Captain Leonard (verbatim), this is [REDACTED] with the Coast
7 Guard. You talked about the Navtex. You're familiar with the
8 Navtex receiver and where that information gets broadcast from?

9 A. Yes.

10 (Crosstalk)

11 A. Right here in New Orleans, (indiscernible) I believe
12 disseminates Navtex. It's not every -- you don't get Navtex
13 everywhere. You'll have, you know, towers spread out along the
14 coastline and if you leave it on and if you're within a
15 dissemination location you receive the messages.

16 Q. Okay. Do you know how many miles the broadcast from the
17 station out of New Orleans goes out?

18 A. We catch it here. I know it's (indiscernible) like 500
19 kilohertz, 500-some kilohertz. It's not a very strong signal.
20 It's, like, almost -- so it goes out maybe up to 150, 100 miles or
21 so, I believe. (Indiscernible) the situations I guess.

22 Q. Right, okay. That's what I just wanted to check. Thank you,
23 Captain.

24 A. Yeah.

25 MR. MUISE: Is there any -- sorry about that. Is there any

1 other follow ups? Okay. Seeing none, so Captain Guidry, I very
2 much appreciate all the detailed information today. It was
3 helpful for all of us, I think, to get your perspective. And
4 please pass on our sincere thanks to your Bollinger crew there.
5 What you guys did that day was awesome, thank you. My last
6 question is, is there anything that I didn't ask that we should
7 know about or that you think would be helpful for us investigating
8 this accident?

9 CAPT. GUIDRY: No, I believe we pretty much covered it. I
10 can't think of anything.

11 MR. MUISE: Okay. If you do think of anything else you can
12 reach me -- actually, you have Andrew's email or we're at
13 witness@NTSB.gov. And with that it's 11:26 on the East Coast.
14 I'll secure the recorder.

15 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CAPSIZING OF LIFT BOAT *SEACOR*
 POWER SOUTH OF PORT FOURCHON,
 LOUISIANA ON APRIL 13, 2021
 Interview of Leonard Guidry

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21FM024

PLACE: Via telephone

DATE: May 4, 2021

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.


Christy Behlke
Transcriber